

# Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

- **Happy Home, Happy Child - How you contribute to your child's thoughts and feelings**
- **Practical advice on how to effectively communicate with your child**
- **The negative effects of prolonged 'screen time'**
- **The benefits of a support network**
- **What resources you can access in school**

## HAPPY HOME, HAPPY CHILD

### *How you contribute to your child's thoughts and feelings*

- **Creating a safe space for everyone in the household is very important**
  - *What is a 'safe space'?*
- **Children can pick up on behavioural patterns and the causes of emotional disruption within their home environment. It is easy to think that children take no notice of what is going on around them and to underestimate the impact it can have on them – for better or for worse.**
  - *Can you think of any examples?*
- **Children need to get enough sleep each night in order to feel their best. Don't we all love a good, refreshing night's sleep?**

According to NHS, the following is the approximate amount of sleep needed by children of different ages:

**4 years** - night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes

**5 years** - night-time: 11 hours

**6 years** - night-time: 10 hours 45 minutes

**7 years** - night-time: 10 hours 30 minutes

## Practical advice on how to effectively communicate with your child

- Does this sound familiar?  
- *“Are you even listening to me?” “Did you hear what I said?”*
- Speak face to face and make eye contact, so you can be sure that your child is listening
- Wait for them to respond so you can determine whether you need to repeat what you’ve said or explain further
- This can be tricky as we are all busy but for a child , it can make all the difference
- Be mindful of the fact that children do not process information as quickly as adults so waiting for a response will create a safe place for them to articulate their thoughts as best they can
- Make it a habit to ask your child how their day was – and then listen to what they have to say.
- Consider your reaction when responding to your child.

## The negative effects of prolonged 'screen time'

- Children can become disconnected from the real world... adults can be guilty of this too.
- How much screen time is too much? A child can become dependent on their computer/game/iPad/phone... the list goes on.
- Can cause arguments and tantrums when asked to come off a device, even if its to have dinner or bed time.
- More children are taking iPad to bed with them to play games or watch youtube and fall asleep with. Not a healthy habit to get into.
- The dangers of what they can see online (E safety)
- Basic social skills can be disrupted.... Eye contact.
- Limiting children's screen time linked to better cognition. A US study found those who used screens recreationally for less than 2 hours a day did better on tests of mental functioning.
- A large study, involving more than 5,000 children who were followed up over two years, found a link between time sitting in front of a screen and an increase in blood pressure rates.
- Sources: <https://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/more-sleep-and-limiting-screen-time-may-improve-childrens-mental-abilities/>

# The benefits of a support network

- Just having someone to talk to about your own personal experiences can be a great help.
- Discovering that you are not alone and your parenting experiences might not be so different.
- Developing empathy for other parents and their children on what they or yourselves may be going through... we all have different needs and expectations.
- ‘Support’ – it’s in the title, having support where you need it.
- Sharing is caring!
- Parenting is not an exact science – advice from well meaning friends and relatives can be really useful.
- In times of crisis,

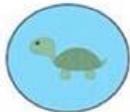
## Resources you can access in school

- Park Hill Infant School's Headship Team, led by Ms Charman, are available to speak to in the event of a family emergency or crisis or if you have concerns that cannot be dealt with the class teacher
- Concerns surrounding your child's daily school experience or educational progress can be referred in the first instance to your child's class teacher
- Daisy Keyte – School Counsellor – works alongside parents to provide in house support for children in the form of counselling, art therapy and play therapy.
- Parent/Carer Coffee Mornings.

# How to nurture a child's mental health



Actively listen before offering your advice



Be patient



Share your feelings and validate theirs



Tell the truth



Model healthy behavior



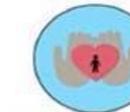
Surround them with healthy adults



Be consistent and follow through with what you promise



Teach them how to be safe



Believe them and in them



Use open ended questions



Have scheduled family time



Limit electronic time for everyone



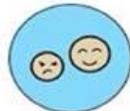
Reach out and hug them



Practice relaxation exercises together



Model forgiveness



Respond calmly when their emotions are elevated



View their behavior as a window to their needs and feelings



Make play and exercise a requirement



Recognize positive choices



Be present



Set and respect boundaries