

Your Child's Mental Health: Mental Wellness in Children Ages 0-5

When you take your child for a primary care visit, your concerns change depending on the age of your child. Your questions should address mental health concerns as well as other physical health concerns. We'd like to share some questions to think about if your child is zero to five years old.

The first five years of life is when your child masters things most of us take for granted. Sleeping well, eating properly, using words, and being able to tell stories. These are the ways humans interact, and we master these skills before we turn five. To find more information about the social and emotional development milestones children reach at this age, take a look at the [Guide for Parents of One to Five-Year-Olds](#) brochure.

Questions to Answer Before a Primary Care Visit – Ages 0 to 5

Here are some questions to ask and think about before your child's next doctor visit. If any of your answers concern you, mention it to your doctor. If your doctor does not ask about something that concerns you, be sure to let them know what you notice.

SLEEP

- Does your child sleep through the night? If not, how often does he or she wake up?
- How long does it take your child to fall asleep or to fall back asleep?
- Where does your child sleep at night? Where does your child sleep during the day?
- Does your child have nightmares? If so, does your child recall the nightmares the next morning?
- Does your child ever wet or soil the bed? How often? When does this happen?
- What is your night-time routine? Does it vary?

FUN

- How does your child have fun?
- Does your child have fun with siblings? With parents? Grandparents?

FEARS

- Does your child have any particular fears?
- How does your child manage fears?

PLAY

- How does your child play? Do they play with friends or next to friends? Does your child have a best friend? Does your child have a group of friends?
- Does your child have an imaginary friend?
- Does your child draw? What does your child draw?

EATING

- When does your child eat meals? When do they snack?
- What does your child eat at meals and at snacks?
- Is your child a picky eater?

SPEECH

- Is your child a big talker?
- Have there been changes in your child's vocabulary?
- Can you understand what your child is saying?
- Does your child tell stories?
- Does your child use colors when telling you stories?
- Does your child use sounds when telling you stories?

Changes within the Family

The well-being of young children may also be affected by chronic family stress or significant life events. These could include separation or divorce, moving to a new home or community, the birth of a child with special needs, or a serious medical diagnosis in the family. Make sure to let your child's pediatrician know if these or other significant changes occur in your family.

SUMMARY

Remember, you know your child best. But if your answer to any of these questions makes you think, look at your thoughts as an opportunity to ask your doctor more questions. After all, that's what your doctor is there for!