

# How to Do Mental Health Check-Ins with Your Children

Mental health check-ins are important for a couple of reasons. First, it lets our children know that we care and are there for them. Second, if there is something going on, we might be able to help them through it before it becomes a bigger issue. Here are a few suggestions to help you check-in with your children.

- ✓ **Ask specific questions** about an activity or thing you know that happened in their day. *Ex. Who did you sit next to at lunch? How was your math test? What drills did you do at soccer practice?*
- ✓ **Then ask specific follow up questions** to show that you were paying attention and you are there to help if they need it. *Ex. What did you like best? What could you have done differently?*
- ✓ **Ask even when you don't want to know the answer**, especially with teens. We need to know if they are thinking about suicide, engaging in sex, or using drugs. Asking about suicide isn't going to make them suicidal, thoughts are often relieved when they are asked.
- ✓ **Determine the right cadence.** Some children like frequent check-ins, and others don't. Ask them about it and work through the right cadence with them.
- ✓ **Use technology where appropriate.** There are mood tracking apps out there that can be helpful for some families. Children can record how they're feeling each day. Daylio is an example of one.
- ✓ **Stay calm.** Sometimes children have big things to tell their parents, and they delay telling them because they're worried about how they will react. We need to stay calm, at least on the outside, and create space for them to be heard.

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**Call or text: 988**

A 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis, or if you have a family member going through these trying times.

## Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC)

**513-636-4124**

Contact the PIRC, the admission and evaluation center for all psychiatric services at Cincinnati Children's, for triage, evaluations, and access to mental health services for children and adolescents.

## Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology

**513-636-8107**

Helping children with medical and behavioral health concerns to improve their outcomes and quality of life.

## MindPeace

[mindpeacecincinnati.com](http://mindpeacecincinnati.com)

**513-803-0844**

With a focus on the improvement and expansion of school-based mental health services, MindPeace works to ensure that there is a seamless system of mental health care for children in Greater Cincinnati.

## National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

[nami.org](http://nami.org) | **800-950-6264**

The nation's largest grassroots, mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness through education, advocacy and support.

## 1n5

[1n5.org](http://1n5.org) | **513-814-3007**

Promoting optimal mental health for youth in Greater Cincinnati through customized evidence-based education and stigma reduction so that we live in a world without suicide.