

WHY SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SCREENING BEFORE 5 IS CRUCIAL

Ensuring that all children, particularly the most vulnerable children with mental health problems, have access to comprehensive, affordable health coverage is not only smart and cost-effective, but it can play an important role in their overall health and well-being.

Mental health problems affect millions of children. Emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders affect children and families in all of our communities.

- One in ten children has a mental illness serious enough to impair how they function at home, at school, and with peers.
- Major mental health problems may occur in children as young as 7 to 11 years old, and even younger.
- Children with mental health problems who have access to quality health care and comprehensive age appropriate mental health screens and assessments have improved health and development.
- Recognizing the importance of prevention, emphasizing early detection, and receiving proper treatment are important to managing mental health problems.
- Intervening early avoids more complex and expensive problems later in life.
- Factors that predict mental health problems can be identified during early years of childhood.
- Treating mental health problems early reduces disability for children, before mental illness becomes more severe.
- Preschools that have access to mental health consultation have lower expulsion rates.
- Early detection and intervention strategies for mental health issues improve children's resilience and ability to succeed in life.
- Children living with major depression who receive combined behavioral therapy and medication have significantly better outcomes and marked decrease in suicidal thinking compared with children who do not receive such comprehensive treatment.

We immunize, use child safety seats, and screen hearing, vision and physical areas of health. Why not social emotional health?

Prevention is key