

An abstract network diagram with various colored nodes (red, blue, green, purple, grey) connected by thin grey lines. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with a dense cluster in the upper right and more sparse connections elsewhere. A dark grey horizontal bar is positioned in the lower half of the image, containing the title and author information.

# Mental Health Matters

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## OBJECTIVES:

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Normal Behavior in Elementary-Aged Children

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Anxiety in Children

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Depression in Children

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Ways COVID-19 affects children

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Recommendations

# Normal Behavior in Elementary -Age Children

Preschool (4 to 5 years old)- seek independence and learn to say “no”, may throw tantrums but gain control over emotions. Time out is effective in this age group.

Grade School (6 to 9 years old) - want more responsibility , but requires guidance to complete chores and homework. Will start to experience complex emotions like anxiety and frustration. Will start to problem-solve. Positive reinforcement-style discipline is effective.

Tweens (10 to 12 years old) - want more independence, but can become mildly argumentative towards parents. They may not be able to see long-term consequences of behavior and struggle with social skills.

# Anxiety in Children

7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety

Anxiety has increased over time: “Ever having been diagnosed with anxiety” among children aged 6-17 years increased from 5.5% in 2007 to 6.4% in 2011-2012

Anxiety disorder:

- when children do not outgrow fears in young childhood

- fears interfere with school, home or play activities

- make children angry and irritable

- symptoms: trouble sleeping, fatigue, headache, stomachaches

- some children keep worries to themselves

# 8 WAYS A CHILD'S ANXIETY SHOWS UP AS SOMETHING ELSE

## 1. Anger

The perception of danger, stress or opposition is enough to trigger the fight or flight response leaving your child angry and without a way to communicate why.



## 2. Difficulty Sleeping

In children, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep is one of the hallmark characteristics of anxiety.



## 3. Defiance

Unable to communicate what is really going on, it is easy to interpret the child's defiance as a lack of discipline instead of an attempt to control a situation where they feel anxious and helpless.



## 8. Overplanning

Overplanning and defiance go hand in hand in their root cause. Where anxiety can cause some children to try to take back control through defiant behavior, it can cause others to overplan for situations where planning is minimal or unnecessary.



## 4. Chandeliering

Chandeliering is when a seemingly calm person suddenly flies off the handle for no reason. They have pushed hurt and anxiety so deep for so long that a seemingly innocent comment or event suddenly sends them straight through the chandelier.



## 5. Lack of Focus

Children with anxiety are often so caught up in their own thoughts that they do not pay attention to what is going on around them.



## 6. Avoidance

Children who are trying to avoid a particular person, place or task often end up experiencing more of whatever it is they are avoiding.



## 7. Negativity

People with anxiety tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.

# EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OF CHILDHOOD ANXIETY

VIA THERAPY  
FOR PARENTS

NEW RESEARCH 2019

Researchers found  
treating PARENTS of  
anxious kids is  
JUST AS  
EFFECTIVE  
as treating  
kids



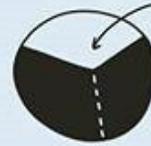
## GOOD PARENTS

Naturally want to  
soothe  
anxious children

**\*BUT\***

over-accommodating  
anxiety can make  
symptoms worse!

ALTHOUGH WELL-INTENTIONED,  
OVER-ACCOMODATION  
leads to MORE SEVERE  
symptoms over time.



**1 IN 3**  
Children will  
experience  
clinically-signif-  
icant anxiety  
symptoms.

One YALE study  
found that

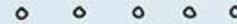
ANXIETY-FOCUSED  
PARENT-COACHING  
with  
NO TREATMENT  
of the child

&

CBT TREATMENT  
FOR CHILD  
with  
NO TREATMENT  
FOR PARENT(S)

were **EQUALLY  
EFFECTIVE**

@reducing anxiety  
symptoms in kids.



THIS COACHING  
focused on how to:

- 1 Reduce accommodations
- 2 while still supporting kids & acknowledging their difficulties.

## EXAMPLES OF OVER-ACCOMODATING\*

- speaking up for a socially anxious child
- answering the same anxious question reassuringly
- participating in elaborate bedtime rituals
- unnecessary doctor's appointments

\*all kids are different & good parenting adapts to unique needs



I know you are  
feeling upset, but  
I know you will  
be okay.

STUDY LED BY  
Wendy K. Silverman  
YALE & NAT'L INSTITUTE  
OF MENTAL HEALTH

VISUALLY TRANSLATED BY  
@LINDSAYBRAMAN

# Depression in Children

3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have diagnosed depression

Depression has increased over time: “Ever having been diagnosed with depression” among children aged 6-17 years did not change between 2007 (4.7%) and 2011-2012 (4.9%)

For youth ages 10-24 years, suicide is among the leading causes of death

Depression disorder:

- feeling sad or uninterested in things they used to enjoy

- helpless or hopeless

- changes in attention, energy, eating and sleeping patterns

- showing self-injury and self-destructive behavior

# DEPRESSION SIGN AND SYMPTOM



## Helplessness

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur ad tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna



## Weight changes

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## Guilt

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## Abandoning hobbies

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## Difficulty sleeping

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## Thoughts of death

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## Energy loss

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## Isolation

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## Anger

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## Anorexia or over-eating

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**Offer support  
and show your  
feelings of love  
and concern for  
your child.**



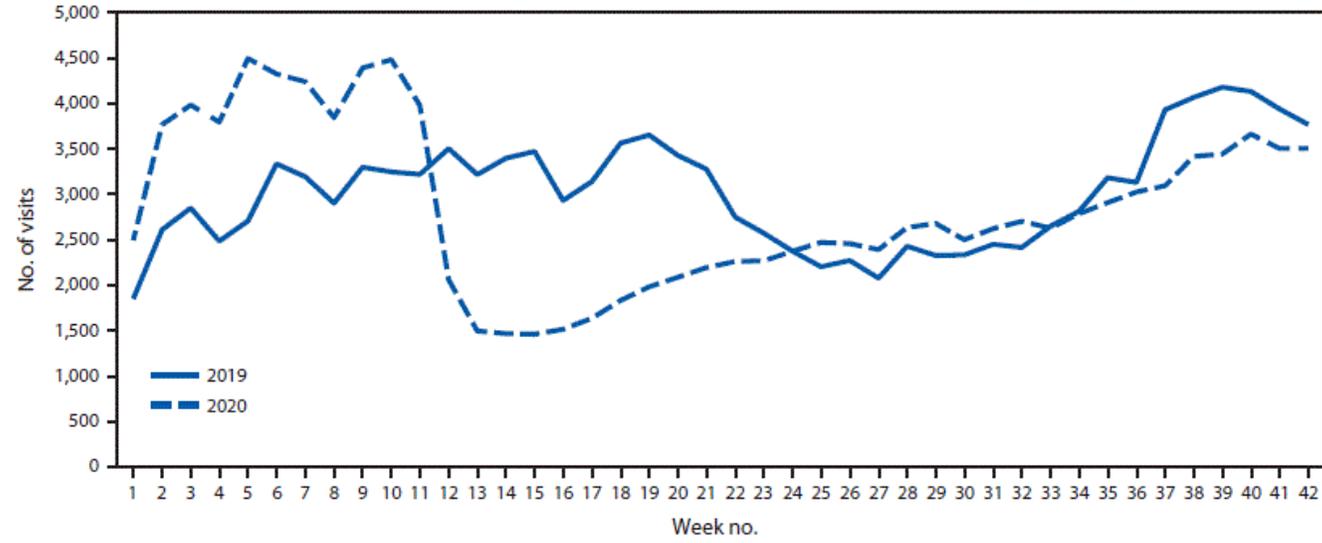
# Ways COVID-19 affects children

The number of children's mental health-related ED visits decreased sharply from mid-March 2020 (week 12, March 15-21) through early April (week 15, April 5-11)

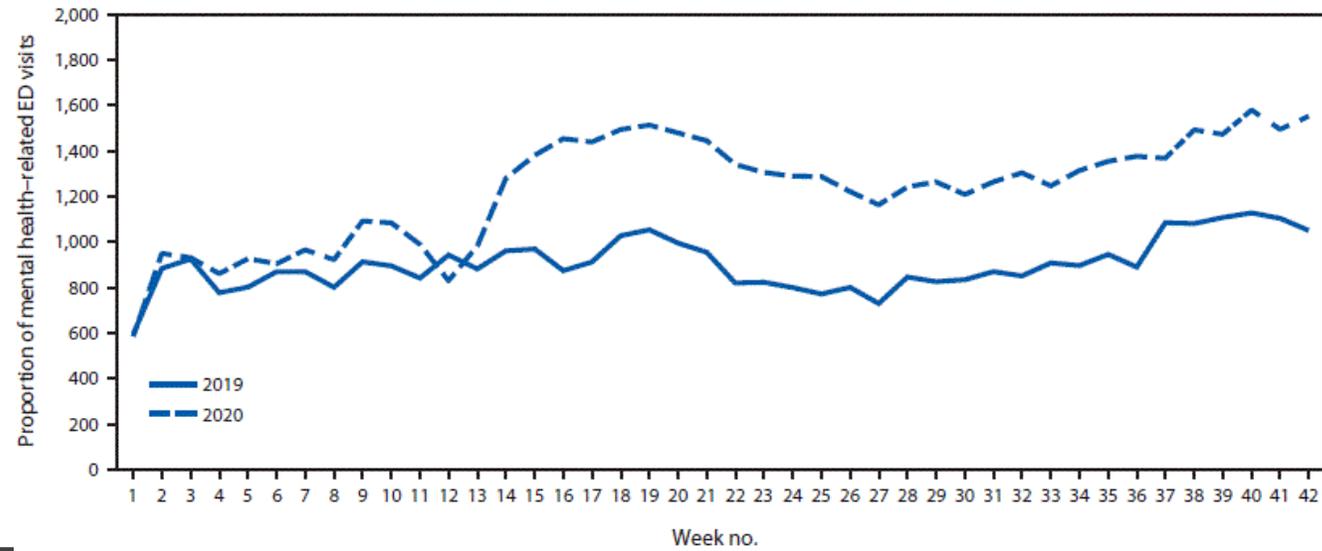
Notable increased steadily through October 2020

During the same time, the overall proportion of reported children's ED visits for mental health-related concerns increased and remained higher through the end of the reporting period in 2020 than that in 2019

A. Mental health-related ED visits



B. Proportion of mental health-related ED visits per 100,000 pediatric ED visits per week



## Recommendation

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Talk to a healthcare provider about getting an evaluation

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- your child's physician

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- mental health specialist (particularly if there is trauma)

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Health Maintenance:

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- healthy eating plan

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- physical activity

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- adequate sleep

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# References

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<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/anxiety-depression-children.html>

[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm#F1\\_down](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm#F1_down)