

Mental Health in Schools

Revised: July 25 2018

What's this project about?

The Child and Youth Mental Health in School Settings project is an initial step toward supporting a provincial collaborative approach to improved mental health outcomes for children and youth. This work is being completed in partnership with **Policy Wise for Children and Families**.

How did we do this?

We reviewed various programs and sources of information to gain a comprehensive understanding of child and youth mental health in school settings. Consulting with key partners helps us understand what is known about child and youth mental health pathways, to support initiatives and services in schools across Alberta. Finally, discussions were held to create a shared vision and approach to address child and youth mental health in schools.

What did we find?

Children and youth live in **multiple contexts**, including their families, schools, and communities. It is important that mental health supports integrate the whole life of the child, **putting them at the centre**.

Families and caregivers are often a **pivot point** in the successful delivery of mental health supports for children and youth. To serve as effective partners in service delivery, they must be **engaged** and **supported** with strategies for information sharing.

Communities play a key role in supporting mental health, including offering local, context-based priorities and solutions, promoting diversity, improving attitudes and awareness, and reducing stigma. Offering mental health support and services **within schools means better**, making it ideal for reaching a large number of children and youth. This is **especially true in rural, remote, and underserved urban areas**.

Some successful ways to support child and youth mental health in school settings, include:

- Working **collaboratively** across sectors
- Creating **common** purposes and principles
- Implementing **child- and youth-centred** approaches
- **Supporting transitions** to, through, and from mental health services
- Adapting **evidence-informed** practices



Mental Health in Schools • 2

These ways of working are most effective when there is: engaged and committed leadership; a knowledgeable, skilled, and stable workforce; and organizational learning and adaptation.

For more information, please contact the Addiction and Mental Health SCN: addictionmentalhealth.scn@ahs.ca