



Children's Mental Health

A timeline of children's worries through different stages of their lives.

Understanding children's worries

Everyone has worries. Some come and go, others stick around for a little while longer. Each passing worry is okay but sometimes as a parent or as someone looking after children, it can be hard to know the things they might worry about.

The things children worry about can vary widely based on individual experiences and circumstances. However, here's a general timeline of common worries for children at different stages of their lives.

We have broken these out into the following sections:

- Babies and toddlers (0-2 years old)
- Preschool (3-5 years old)
- Early childhood (6-8 years)
- Middle childhood (9-11 years old)
- Early teens (12-14 years old)
- Late teens (15-18 years old)



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Babies & toddlers (0-2 years old)

Basic needs: Infants and toddlers typically worry about having their basic needs met, such as being fed, having a clean nappy, and feeling secure.

Separation anxiety: Separation from their primary caregivers can cause worry and distress during this stage.

Did you know, until 6 months old a baby doesn't understand that its mum is not the same being as them?



Preschool (3-5 years old)

Monsters and imaginary fears: This includes monsters under the bed, imaginary creatures, or things they can't see.

Toilet training: Potty training can be a source of anxiety for many children.

Socialisation: As they begin interacting with other children more, they might worry about making friends and being liked by others.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Early childhood (6-8 years old)

School performance: During school ages, children may worry about doing well in school and pleasing their teachers.

Friendships and peer acceptance: Children may worry about fitting in and maintaining friendships.

Physical appearance: Some children start to become aware of their physical appearance and may worry about their looks and body image.



Middle childhood (9-11 years old)

Academic pressure: Schoolwork becomes more demanding and worries grow about academic success.

Bullying: Bullying may be a prominent concern, leading to worries about peer interactions.

Family issues: Children might worry about family dynamics such as divorce or conflicts at home.

Self-identity: Questions about self-identity and fitting in with a peer group can be a source of worry.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Early teens (12-14 years old)

Academic and future goals: Academic pressure intensifies as children begin thinking about their future and career goals.

Social acceptance and romantic relationships: Worrying about dating, romantic relationships, and social status often begins in the early teen years.

Peer pressure: Concerns about fitting in may grow and peer pressures can become stronger.



Identity and self-expression: Questions about self-identity, values, and personal beliefs become more prominent.

Social and romantic relationships: More complex romantic relationships and concerns about peer acceptance continue to be prevalent.



Adolescence: Young teens may experience anxiety related to their changing bodies and development.



Late teens (15-18 years old)

Academic and college/career choices: Choosing a university or career path can be a major source of worry.

Independence: Adolescents often worry about becoming more independent, including making decisions, and living on their own.

External support

If you are worried about a child's wellbeing, there are several organisations that can provide support.



0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk
www.nspcc.org.uk



fighting for young people's mental health

www.youngminds.org.uk



Text CONNECT to 85258
www.place2be.org.uk



www.nhs.uk



www.bernardos.org.uk



Call 116123
www.samaritans.org.uk