

FactSheet

Mental Health

In any given year, 20% of children and adolescents have an emotional, behavioral or mental health disorder and at least 5% have a disorder serious enough that it disrupts daily functioning at home, at school, or in the community. This translates to approximately one million children and adolescents under the age of 18 in New York State that have a treatable mental health disorder.

The array of services for children and families has grown over time, with an emphasis on community-based services that allow children to remain at home and in school while receiving treatment. Yet most mental health disorders go undiagnosed and untreated, often leading to lifelong problems for the child and family. Early recognition and prompt access to treatment can prevent a downward spiral of school failure, drug abuse, poor employment and poverty in adulthood.



Key Facts

- ▶ Students classified by schools as emotionally disturbed have poorer educational outcomes than all other students with disabilities. About 32% of those classified as emotionally disturbed graduate from high school. Those with physical disabilities have a 67% graduation rate.
- ▶ For over 20 years, suicide has been the third leading cause of death, among those 15 to 19 years of age in New York.
- ▶ Mental health and substance abuse needs have been and continue to be the top two service needs of youth upon admission to juvenile detention facilities in New York State.
- ▶ Less than 10% of families in New York State report that their children utilized mental health services in 2002. Children who are uninsured or who have private insurance utilize less mental health care than do children covered by Medicaid or Child Health Plus.

We Can Do Better

- ▶ New York State needs to continue to invest in a variety of child and family-centered services and supports for children and youth with mental health needs so that all families have timely access to appropriate services within their community. These services must be coordinated cross-systems and be available to all youth and families in need.
- ▶ New York State must continue the work of the Cross-System Commissioners group and their implementation of *The Children's Plan: Improving the Social and Emotional Well Being of New York's Children and Their Families*, and insure the availability of peer to peer family support in all systems.