

Media release



Kids Helpline welcomes the Federal Government's new strategy for mental health early intervention

Tracy Adams, Chief Executive Officer of **yourtown**, said that Kids Helpline welcomes the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy announced today to help support the mental health and wellbeing of children 12 years and younger.

"It is great to see that children are getting a specific focus through this strategy which also seeks to extend supports to their parents and carers who are very much at the front line, when it comes to a child's mental health and being.

"We know that more serious mental health concerns can be averted before they escalate with early intervention. Young children under 12 years of age tell us they experience issues ranging from anxiety, problems sleeping, anger issues or mood swings, through to the emergence of self-harming behaviours, eating disorders, depression and in some instances suicide related concerns.

"Over the past 12 months, mental health was the number one reason children and young people contacted Kids Helpline, with the complexity of issues reported to our professional counsellors over the past 30 years growing substantially with greater numbers of younger children needing ongoing counselling.

"Parentline, a service of **yourtown** supporting parents and carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory, has also seen contacts to the service around children's mental health.

"We welcome the recommendations, including increased resources for public mental health services for children 12 and under, and more training to help GPs and paediatricians.

"We need to ensure we create access to early intervention services that directly target and support younger children who may be experiencing adverse emotional wellbeing at this critical age of development.

"We do not want to miss any opportunity to support children," concluded Ms Adams.

Kids Helpline is working hard to do just that by not only offering counselling and support 24/7 but by creating positive mental health in children at the grass roots through Kids Helpline @ School.

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