

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Emotional Seedlings - Cultivating good mental health in nursery children

A positive and nurturing environment fosters a sense of security and belonging, which is essential for every child's emotional well-being.

Creating an environment that actively prioritises children's mental health will provide a strong foundation for healthy social and emotional development not only now but into the future.

Here are some tips on how to achieve that:

- **Build strong relationships:** Secure attachments with you will help to create a safe and trusting space where children are comfortable to express their emotions and needs
- **Emotional expression:** Teach and model the language of emotions e.g. name them and say how they make you feel. Provide creative activities as an alternative way to express feelings e.g. clay, paint, gloop etc.
- **Social interaction:** Encourage group activities and cooperative play (taking into consideration individual preferences) to help children learn essential skills such as sharing, communication and empathy
- **Outdoor play:** Children tend to express themselves more freely in the outdoor space due to having more freedom to use their bodies, raise their voices and be generally less constrained
- **Consistent, predictable routines:** Routines create a sense of stability and security in knowing what to expect. Consistency helps children to feel safe and reduce anxiety
- **Observe and respond:** Observing and responding to children's needs demonstrates that you respect and understand their uniqueness. It also allows you to support and intervene appropriately
- **Teach coping strategies:** Teach simple strategies such as deep breathing, use a feelings fan/chart, shaking their body etc. to empower children to manage stress



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- **Communicate with parents:** Regular, effective communication with parents/carers helps to gain insights into a child's home environment to ensure a holistic approach to each child's mental health
- **Keep yourself informed and seek professional help when needed:** Continuous learning about child development and mental health issues will enhance your awareness of signs of distress and your knowledge about when to seek professional help and support.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- [Your Essential Guide to Children's Well-being](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna