



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

Alabama
State Board
of Education

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Governor Kay Ivey
President

OUR STATE AND NATION ARE CELEBRATING 2021
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Jackie Zeigler
District I
Vice President



During the past year, our nation's K-12 students have spent significantly more time away from the traditional classroom.

Many families and students have truly missed in-classroom learning and the great interactions it creates – time with peers and the positive social connections.

Tracie West
District II

Stephanie Bell
District III

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV
President Pro Tem

Our nation has become more focused on increasing the total wellbeing of all children. Next week, Alabama will be celebrating *Children's Mental Health Awareness Week*, on May 2-8.

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

This will be a great opportunity for families to discuss mental health awareness. The 2021 event theme is "**Flip the Script on Mental Health.**" Addressing children's mental health needs and questions is an important responsibility for everyone.

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

Well-known brands, like the *Sesame Street* organization have also join the national effort to discuss mental health-related topics with parents and students – <https://youtu.be/aEmaWlxyhj8>

Belinda McRae
District VII

"It is vital for students, families, and Alabama's local communities to learn the potential warning signs of mental health disorders," said Alabama State Department of Education Administrator, Dr. Kay Warfield. "Alabama families need to know exactly where to obtain professional assistance if needed. As adults, parents, and caregivers we truly have a great responsibility to demonstrate to our children that it is okay to take care of both your physical and mental health."

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

Mental health awareness also is important because it can teach young people very valuable lessons on how to assist others, who may be experiencing personal mental health challenges. It is a perfect resource to help shape an even brighter and healthier future for students.

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

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Alabama Celebrating Children's Mental Health Awareness Week on May 2-8

As a central theme, which is outlined in the *2020 Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan*, expanding access to mental health services and support is a top priority for Alabama's educators.

Assistant State Superintendent Terry Roller and ALSDE Prevention and Support Coordinator, Dr. Marilyn Lewis are helping to move this important goal forward in Alabama.

<https://www.alsde.edu/Documents/ACHIEVES2020-V20.pdf>

Parents and caregivers can use this weblink to access resources from the National Federation of Families, which provides helpful tips and family-focused mental health information:

<https://www.ffcmh.org/cmha-activities-for-youth>

Families can also discover some of the best ways to discuss self-care, COVID-19 and proven methods to cope with stress, at <https://www.ffcmh.org/covid-19-resources-for-parents>

To learn more about the Alabama State Department of Education's efforts and special initiatives to promote youth mental health and awareness, contact ALSDE Education Administrator, Dr. Kay Warfield at 334-694-4717 or kaw@ALSDE.edu.

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