



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

May 1, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day - May 7, 2015

Join the Virginia Department of Education and school divisions across the country in celebrating the **National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, May 7, 2015**. This day is to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health. The national event will highlight strategies for integrating behavioral health with primary health care, child welfare and education.

This day is an opportunity to acknowledge the impact that school staff members have on the lives of students when positive mental health practices are integrated into the school day. Only one in five of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems will receive treatment, and many will receive these services from school based mental health professionals. Mental health encompasses social and emotional development and is essential to learning. Because of this important interplay between emotional health and school success, schools must be partners in the mental health care of students.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has partnered with Creating Community Solutions to develop "Text, Talk, Act," a free, interactive tool that school staff can use to facilitate small group discussions on mental health. Text, Talk, Act uses text messaging to facilitate a face-to-face conversation on mental health.

Please refer to the following online resources and tools to help support children's mental health awareness:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/children/national-childrens-awareness-day-events/awareness-day-2015>

<http://creatingcommunitysolutions.org/texttalkact>.

<http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/>

<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/index.html>

<http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>

Let's show our support and raise awareness as we recognize children's mental health. Additional information and questions regarding school based mental health may be directed to Dr. Vivian Stith-Williams, school social worker specialist, by e-mail at Vivian.Stith-Williams@doe.virginia.gov; telephone (804) 225-4543.

SRS/vsw