

Sarah Mallard Wakefield, M.D.

What should parents know about their kid's mental health now that kids have been back in school for a couple of weeks?

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I think this is a great time to check in with kiddos every time that there's a transition that can definitely be a trigger for mental health distress. So great time to ask questions like, how's school going? How are you know any, any trouble in the hallways, how's your relationship with your kids in your class or your teachers or your new coach? So really kind of natural time to have those conversations.

What symptoms or signs can parents be on the lookout for to help their children?

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You know, as a parent, you know, your kids so well. And if you see a change in their behaviors now, all kids are changing all the time. So they can be developing and finding new normals for sure. But when you see a change, I think it's a time to ask about that. So are they coming to the dinner less? Are they groaning about getting up in the morning for school more? Are they you know, staying out later or not participating in family conversation like they used to? Or really, you know, keep talking about one friend who's frustrating to them or one friend group, a great time to really ask those questions, say, Hey, I've noticed this. What's going on?

What is CATR?

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CATR is I really think about this program as catering to school districts and to schools as much as possible in collaborating for children's mental health care. So the acronym stands for campus alliance for telehealth resources. But what we do is try to fill in the gaps of all of the many, many things that schools and school districts do provide to kids. But they're, it's hard to be all encompassing, there's so many needs, and they're so vast, and teachers and educators are already doing so much to support our kids and our families, that what CATR does is try to partner with those schools and come in and say how can we help you facilitate and support the mental health care of the students in your school and that could be through education. Through really we have student facing education about mental health, we have educator facing education about mental health for counselors and administrators and teachers. And we also have direct assessment and direct services for students who a school may find, you know, hey, I'm really worried about this kiddo. And with the parent guardian consent, we can then provide those services directly to the student and family.

Why is early intervention important?

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It is so critically important to intervene as early as possible. When we intervene early, we have to intervene less, and we make so much of a bigger change with that lesser intervention. When we wait and ignore and let things fester. Then we create much more suffering. And we create a

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bigger problem bigger mountain to climb. So intervene early helps us decrease the stigma say you're suffering, we need to address this you deserve that and it helps us do less than we would have to do if we waited, which means less time spent away from school, less time spent in intervention, less appointments to go to and less associated cost as well.

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