

# Childrens Mental Health Week

## May 5 - 11, 2013



The Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) invites you to join us in celebrating Children's Mental Health Week 2013.

This year's theme is, "Out of the Shadows: Exposing Stigma."

Join us to help create awareness and reduce the stigma of children's mental health!

PPAL celebrates all May, so stay-up-to-date with Children's Mental Health Week by checking out PPAL's website:

[www.ppal.net/about](http://www.ppal.net/about)



## Facts About Stigma

Stigma unfortunately is a common experience for people who have mental health needs. Stigma can be obvious, such as someone making a negative remark about your mental illness or your treatment. Or it may be subtle, such as someone assuming you could be unstable, violent or dangerous because you have a mental health condition. You may even judge yourself.

### Harmful effects of stigma may include:

Not being offered the same opportunities as peers  
Bullying or harassment  
Discrimination at work or school  
Refusal to seek treatment  
Rejection by family and friends  
Low self-esteem  
Poor grades



### What can we do?

- Challenge disrespectful terms used to refer to people with a mental illness such as psycho or lunatic
- Refer first to a person, not their illness – use phrases such as “a person with schizophrenia” rather than labels like “a schizophrenic”
- Include mental illness in discussions about acceptance of diversity,
- Emphasize abilities not limitations of children

### Resource for Parents & Teachers:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/bbMentalHealthStigma.pdf>



## More Ways to Fight Stigma

### Simple Ways to Promote Children's Mental Health Week:

- Wear a green ribbon (See other side for the ribbon's history)
- Read the Month of Facts page with coworkers, family, & friends
- Post facts and pictures relating to children's mental health on your social media sites
- Attend an event listed on the Calendar of Events Page
- Ask your child's school to host a day when everyone can wear green for children's mental health

# What is Children's Mental Health Week?

- Children's Mental Health Week was started in 1991 by a group of parents in Missouri. The parents wanted to fight stigma and raise awareness about the challenges children, youth, and families face with mental health needs.
- PPAL brought Children's Mental Health Week to Massachusetts in 1996. Each year, the campaign has grown, reaching more people with a message of dignity and inclusion.
- Each year PPAL sends out a Proclamation for Children's Mental Health Week. (See below for this year's Proclamation.) Since 2002, the Governor of Massachusetts has issued an official proclamation.



## Why a Green Ribbon?

Wearing a green ribbon represents solidarity and promoting awareness for children's mental health. In the 1800's, the color green was used to brand people who were labeled as "insane." The children's mental health community decided to reclaim the color green with a positive message. Green now means new life, new growth, and new beginnings. In 2007, the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health launched its Annual Green Ribbon Campaign. The green ribbon has become an important part of Children's Mental Health Week.



## Proclamation for 2013

**Whereas**, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts value their health and mental health and that of their families; therefore, they are proud to support observances such as Children's Mental Health Week; and

**Whereas**, one in five children has a diagnosable mental health disorder and one-half of all lifetime instances of mental illness begin before age 14; and even some children and youth with the most intense needs and some who are insured may not receive services; and

**Whereas**, children and youth with mental health needs in elementary, middle and high school are more likely to be bullied, absent, suspended, expelled or fail to graduate; and

**Whereas**, learning to recognize the early warning signs of mental health needs and where to obtain the necessary support, assistance and treatment gives children and youth better opportunities to lead full and productive lives; and

**Whereas**, the participation and partnership of family members in the assessment and treatment of children and youth is essential to positive outcomes; and

**Whereas**, our nation's future depends on the health and well-being of its families and their children; and

**Whereas**, Children's Mental Health Week was developed by families of children with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs, to focus on the needs of their children and families; in celebrating this year's theme: "Out of the Shadows: Exposing Stigma" it is fitting to increase public awareness among all Massachusetts citizens of this important issue;

**Now, Therefore, I, Deval Patrick, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim May 5-11, 2013 as CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**