

Risk factors

There are certain risk factors that make some children and young people more likely to experience problems than other children, but they don't necessarily mean difficulties are bound to come up or are even probable.

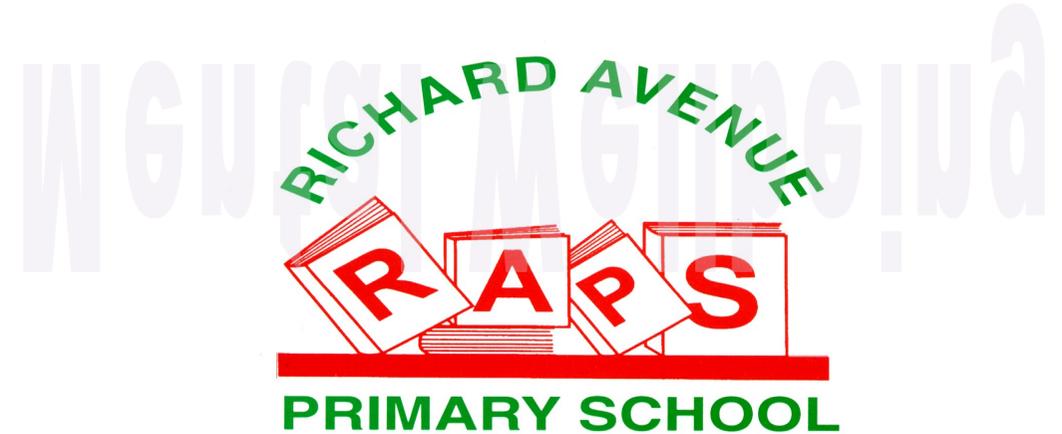
Some of these factors include:

- having a long-term physical illness
- having a parent who has had mental health problems, problems with alcohol or has been in trouble with the law
- experiencing the death of someone close to them
- having parents who separate or divorce
- having been severely bullied or abused
- living in poverty or being homeless
- experiencing discrimination, perhaps because of their race, sexuality or religion
- acting as a carer for a relative, taking on adult responsibilities
- having long-standing educational difficulties.

Information from the:



Mental Wellbeing



Mental Health in children and young people.

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

Alarmingly, however, 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils

Other factors are also important, including:

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.

Most children grow up mentally healthy, but surveys sug-

Dealing with change

Mostly things that happen to children don't lead to mental health problems on their own, but traumatic events can trigger problems for children and young people who are already vulnerable.

Changes often act as triggers: moving home or school or the birth of a new brother or sister, for example. Some children who start school feel excited about making new friends and doing new activities, but there may also be some who feel anxious about entering a new environment.

