

Countywide Services Agency

Department of Health and Human
Services

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Laura McCasland 875-2008

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day to be Celebrated at Kids Day in the Park

Healthy All Over

Mental, social, emotional and physical health contribute to children's overall well-being

Sacramento, CA., -- May is Mental Health Month and Tuesday, May 3, is National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. Sacramento County's Health and Human Services is starting the celebration Saturday, April 30, at Rancho Cordova's 22nd annual Kid's Day in the Park.

"Every child's mental health is important," stated Lisa Bertaccini, chief of Child and Family Mental Health, Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services. "We know that children are resilient and can thrive when given tools they can use, and when they have a lasting relationship with a caring adult who is committed to their well being."

Prevention works. Children raised in a safe and nurturing environment with access to services when needed are more likely to thrive and are markedly less likely to experience mental health disorders.

Prevention is facilitated by eating a healthy and balanced diet, exercising, getting adequate sleep, getting appropriate medical checkups and having fun.

Parents should:

- Talk often with their children from the day they are born.
- Hug, hold, and respond to children's needs and interests.
- Listen carefully as children communicate with them.
- Read aloud to children every day, even when they are babies. Play and sing with them often.
- Say "yes" and "I love you" as much as they say "no" and "don't."
- Ensure a safe, orderly, and predictable environment, wherever children are.
- Encourage open communication among family members.
- Decrease isolation by becoming involved with faith based or other community based groups/activities.

And, if parents need help, they should seek help.

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (con't_)

Treatment is effective. Children who experience an emotional disturbance benefit from appropriate treatment. Early intervention is most effective to alleviate symptoms and distress.

Children recover. Just because someone has a mental health issue now, does not mean that they will not experience full recovery. Children are especially resilient. They thrive when given the tools they need to be successful and when they have a caring adult who has a permanent commitment to their well being.

To learn more, please come to the Kid's Day at the Park, 11 am to 3 pm, Saturday April 30, Hagan Park, 2197 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova. Admission is free.

In addition to hosting the special attraction, the Department of Health and Human Services will provide free totes and information to parents.

Also, featured this year are giant balloon sculptures, free hay rides, street train and steam train rides, plus "Things that Go Zoom," an area full of trucks, tractors, fire engines and more things that make noise and fascinate children.

On stage, non-stop free entertainment kicks off at 11 a.m. with "Triple Threat," a local kids musical performing group. Next, Critters & Creatures puppets are followed by Magic with Kenn, Mad Science, with Music Matt's Band performing at 2 pm.

Free bounce houses and a giant slide are a great way to burn off kid-energy and Pee Wee Racers are scaled down sport cars with a racetrack just for kids. All attractions are free.

Swimming is open free of charge from 1-3 p.m. Kids must be accompanied by an adult. And lunch and kettle corn are available for a nominal charge.

Kids Day attractions are provided free of charge by sponsors including Atlas Disposal, Allied Waste, Golden State Water Company, Heritage Community Credit Union, Schnitzer Steel, Waste Management, Lewis Planned Communities, SMUD, Sims Metal Management and Kaiser Permanente and Walgreens.

The Rancho Cordova Police Activities League (PAL) will be providing bike safety training. Kids who successfully complete the circuit will be eligible to win one of many bikes up for grabs on Kids Day. Mercy will hand out free bike helmets.

In fact, information for Moms and Dads is a big part of Kid's Day and it will be in ample supply at the nearly 80 exhibits and booths. Each booth has been tasked with providing a fun activity, but all will be dispensing information about activities and programs aimed at improving children and family wellness.

"Children will enjoy taking steam train rides, visiting animals at the Hagan Park Petting Barn, and participating in craft projects, games and fun competitions," said Amy Hiramoto, who is chairing the event. "But we want to make sure parents leave with lots of information, too."

Kids Day in the Park is sponsored by a host of organizations, including Sacramento County, Cordova Community Council, Cordova Recreation and Park District, Folsom Cordova Unified School District, Folsom Cordova Community Partnership, Cordova Church of Christ, New Life Center, Sacramento Valley Live Steamers Railroad, the City of Rancho Cordova and others.

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (con't_)

For Kids Day general information, please contact the Cordova Community Council at info@cordovacouncil.org or call 916-273-5704.

For Children's Mental Health Awareness Information, please contact Laura McCasland at McCaslandla@SacCounty.net or call 916-875-2008.

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