

Stuck in a funk

When your child is feeling unmotivated and seems to be grumpy for days, you might worry, or feel annoyed and frustrated. It can be hard to know what to do.

Talking to your kids

Children can have low moods, have a harder time getting over disappointment, and may show their feelings through irritability or tantrums if they're younger. We want to support them in their feelings, rather than trying to find solutions or changing their mood.

HERE'S HOW:

- Sit at their level.
- Listen. Try to understand and empathize with how they are feeling.
- Provide comfort at their pace, remembering to listen more than talk.
- When you notice you want to try and change your child's feelings, take three breaths and focus on your connection with them.

Did you know?

Developmental changes in kids' brains as they grow, especially teens, can create mood swings. Emotional ups and downs are part of life. Learning to work through our feelings helps us move through our "funks" in a healthy way and helps build coping skills and resiliency.



Parents of teens:

You most likely have experienced a mood swing or two. Similar to adults and children, occasional low moods are typical. While not always easy, providing support is an important element of care during these times.

HERE'S HOW:

- Stay involved in their everyday lives.
- Acknowledging their feelings and their mood.
- Keep the door and lines of communication open to allow them to come to you when they need support.
- Respectfully, encourage them in problem solving and new perspectives.
- Help them recognize what they are feeling and ways they can feel better, like focusing on helping others or practicing gratitude.
- Use [reflections cards](#) as reminders of steps that can be taken to validate feelings and practice self-compassion.

Be mindful when blue moods turn into something more severe, look for signs such as how many times your child is feeling blue, how long it lasts and how severe their sadness becomes.

A Special-Needs Perspective:

While these talking points can apply to all children, children with special needs may face more challenges or increased frequency of blue moods. Speech and language challenges can make it difficult for some children to express how they feel. For other children, adaptability can be a challenge, which can lead to an increase in sadness.

It's important for caregivers to validate their feelings, as a way to help them through it.

HERE'S HOW

- Listen, acknowledge, and rephrase what your child is saying.
- Help them feel seen and heard.
- Develop a list of coping strategies together and refer to the list.
- Allow them to choose a tool as a way to help move through the feelings.

This may be challenging at first but with practice this can become easier. [Reflection cards](#) are great reminders for both you and your child on how to handle a situation when feeling down.

If you notice your child's mental health is interfering with school, social activities, interests it may be time to get help from a professional mental health provider.

Your child may benefit from therapy if you answer "yes" to any of these questions:

- Is your child losing their appetite or eating more?
- Have they withdrawn from friends or family?
- Has their hygiene or sleep changed?
- Do they have trouble concentrating?
- Are they experiencing suicidal thoughts?

Therapy can help

Therapy helps kids of all ages get comfortable with their emotions, change negative or distorted thinking patterns, and reduce symptoms of depression.

You may benefit from caregiver coaching if you:

- Want to build confidence in your parenting skills
- Are looking for ways to help your child identify, understand and cope with their emotions



Get support

If your child is having a hard time with their feelings or you are concerned about their mood you might consider scheduling a therapy session for them. Coaching can help parents and caregivers develop strategies for helping children handle their emotions, develop healthy behaviors, and build confidence in their parenting style. Sign in to schedule a session, or learn more about how Spring Health can support you: benefits@springhealth.