



Mental Health Supports for SWD

Office of Special Education

Overview



The Child Mind Institute identified that “children struggling with mental health and learning disorders are at risk for poor outcomes in school and in life, and outdated approaches to discipline are only making matters worse. Instead of putting kids further at risk, schools should be identifying and supporting at-risk children. A widely deployed, integrated system of evidence-supported, school-based mental health and preventive services is needed. If we want to help our children and our schools, we cannot wait.” (Children's Mental Health Report, 2016). With considerations to prevention programs, tiered intervention supports, and equitable access for all learners, schools can design their approach to combat additional barriers for struggling learners who are also at-risk mental health needs.

Data and Statistics

25%

People with intellectual disabilities had higher rates of symptoms of common mental health problems (25%) compared to those with average (17.2%) or above-average (13.4%) intellectual functioning.

4.5x more likely

Children with learning disabilities are four and a half times more likely to have a mental health problem than children without a learning disability.

Promising Practices



1

Positive, Proactive Approaches to Supporting Children with Disabilities: A Guide for Stakeholders

Every child should have access to a high-quality education provided in a safe, supportive, and predictable learning environment free from discrimination, filled with healthy, trusting relationships, and one that ensures their social, emotional, and academic growth and development. Children with disabilities have historically faced systemic barriers to accessing their education and, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, have faced greater challenges to their social, emotional, and academic development and success. It is therefore crucially important for schools and early childhood programs to support the social, emotional, academic, and behavioral needs of children with disabilities; consider the harmful effects that inappropriate and ineffective discipline can have on child development and outcomes; and invest in alternative strategies and supports to address learning and behavioral needs (USED, 2022).

2

National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

The mission of the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) is to strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth.



New Jersey Partnership for Student Success



New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Guide



Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community (NJDOE)



Office of Special Education (NJDOE): Behavior Supports and Interventions



National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

Data and Statistics



Mental Health and learning disorders are linked to a greater probability of dropping out. (Lawrence, 2022)

According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2022), 17.2% of children with disability have been exposed to violence in their neighborhood, compared with 5.3% of children without disability.

