

## Parenting tips for childhood depression

It's natural for your child to feel sad or anxious at times, but if these emotions persistently show up, they could be indicators of depression. According to a recent RBC Children's Mental Health poll, 60 per cent of parents said they would feel nervous or worried if their child indicated signs of a mental health issue.

Here are some warning signs of depression to watch for:

**The blues**—Does your child show little interest in activities or friends he or she used to enjoy? Monitor the situation, which may be more serious if the sadness persists for more than a month.

**Changes in appetite** – Has your child recently experienced any weight loss or gain?

**Sleep problems** – Does your child sleep too much and seem lethargic constantly or have trouble sleeping? This could be indicative of a larger problem.

**Frequent complaining** - Pay attention to complaining, particularly about health problems that seem to have no physical cause. They may have vague "aches and pains", and miss school frequently.

**Trouble getting along with others.** A child or teenager who is picked on, teased, or excluded, may be depressed and need help. Pay special attention if your child is becoming socially isolated.

**Problems with schoolwork.** If your child's grades are slipping, or they are neglecting homework, these may be signs that they are having trouble concentrating. Worry could be keeping them from doing their best work.

The RBC Children's Mental Health Project provides a number of trusted resources available for parents at [www.rbc.com/childrensmentalhealth](http://www.rbc.com/childrensmentalhealth). These tips were drafted with the assistance of Ceridian Canada, RBC's employee assistance provider.