Children in Australia today:

4,150,138 children under the age of 12
Just over 16% of the Australian population (March 2021)

71% live in large cities
2% live in remote areas
27% live in regional areas

7 out of 10 of the most common presentations to paediatricians are for mental health.

Evidence indicates the first 2000 days of life are a critical period, and interventions during this time can result in significant improvement to children’s early life experiences, health and development.

One study found that 50% of children with mental illness continue to struggle in adulthood;

...while the other 50% no longer warranted a diagnosis.

65% of parents in Australia are not confident they could identify the signs of social or emotional problems in their children.

66% of parents don’t know where to go for help.

More than 50% of children with mental health issues are not receiving professional support.

50% of all adult mental health issues emerge before the age of 14.
The National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is focused on children from birth to 12 years of age. It makes a plan for how we can help children, their families and their communities to feel their best.

The Strategy talks about all the types of environments children live, learn and play in.

**Eight Guiding Principles:**

- **Child-centred**
  - Giving priority to the interests and needs of children.
- **Strengths-based**
  - All services have a perspective that builds on child and family strengths, to inform a holistic and family-centred approach.
- **Prevention-focused**
  - Both universal and targeted prevention of mental illness by promoting mental wellbeing.
- **Equity and access**
  - Ensuring that all children and families have access to health, education and social services.
- **Universal system**
  - Programs and services are developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive and treat children in the context of families and communities.
- **Evidence-informed**
  - Uses best practice and continuous quality evaluation.
- **Early intervention**
  - Early intervention for those in need, while addressing the impacts of trauma and social determinants.
- **Needs based, not diagnosis driven**
  - Service delivery based on individual needs and reduced focus on requiring a diagnosis to access services.

**Four Focus Areas:**

1. **Family and Community**
2. **The Service System**
3. **Education Settings**
4. **Evidence and Evaluation**

The National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy delivers a framework that outlines the requirements for an effective system of care for children.

This Strategy has been developed with invaluable input from a diverse range of children and young people, in close consultation with industry expertise and the wider Australian community. It aims to provide a long-term vision for how Australia should support the mental health and wellbeing of all children.