

**Governor Phil Murphy**

# Murphy Administration Unveils Youth Mental Health One-Stop Resource Website

09/30/2021

**TRENTON** – Yesterday at a media briefing on COVID-19, Governor Phil Murphy and members of his administration announced a new web tool – [covid19.nj.gov/youthhelp](https://covid19.nj.gov/youthhelp) (<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/youthhelp>) – designed to link parents, youth, and educators with resources and supports to address youth mental health challenges exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. In the last two budget cycles, Governor Murphy has invested more than \$100M in annual funding to modernize and rebalance the Children’s System of Care, in recognition of the need for a strong mental healthcare safety net for children and youth dealing with the emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the Administration’s investment, New Jersey has capacity, resources, and staff to address the needs of youth in the Garden State.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for all of us throughout the State, and we know that children, teens, and young adults are no exception,” **said Governor Murphy**. “At a time when we knew our children would need it, we didn’t shy away from investing state resources where they were needed most – in strengthening and enhancing the Children’s System of Care. By investing critical state dollars in modernizing the youth mental health system, and by helping families navigate the programs that are available to help, we’re living up to our responsibility, as a State, to support youth who were hit hard by the emotional weight of the pandemic. No one should ever feel like they’re struggling in isolation – in New Jersey, we lift each other up, and we will get through this crisis stronger together.”

“Early in the pandemic, we recognized the signs of what I referred to as a parallel epidemic of youth behavioral and emotional concerns,” **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. “We know that all of us, in the last year and a half, have experienced a sense of loss and grief – whether we lost someone close to us as a result of COVID-19, or we lost any sense and semblance of ‘normal.’ We recognize that the transition back to in-person education isn’t particularly quick or easy, but when children are exhibiting a pattern of prolonged stress or anxiety, that’s when parents should seek out some additional help. We ask that parents be aware of the signs – maybe it’s uncharacteristic changes in mood, or increased and prolonged patterns of fighting or lying, or maybe it’s not enjoying the activities that they once enjoyed. Don’t be afraid to ask your children what’s wrong, and normalize asking for help when they need it. To the children, teens, and parents who are struggling, please know that help is available.”

The webpage, which is accessible through the State’s COVID-19 web portal or by going directly to [covid19.nj.gov/youthhelp](https://covid19.nj.gov/youthhelp) (<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/youthhelp>), is intended to act as a one-stop web resource for programs, services, and supports that specifically address youth behavioral or emotional health concerns. The site will continually be improved and updated to provide youth, families, and educators with tools to empower themselves to support their own mental health and demystify and destigmatize the need to ask for help. By helping families navigate the support infrastructure, the expectation is that it will be easier for families to seek out and connect to help.

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Resources are available for different audiences – the 2ND FLOOR phone and text helpline and the Crisis Text Line for children and youth; The Children’s System of Care hotline and mental health first aid tools for parents; and resources and tools for educators to support their students’ mental health in the classroom. The site will be monitored and maintained by the Office of Innovation and will be updated with additional tools and site architecture in response to family’s needs.

“This youth mental health page will be an organic, living, resource for the families, youth, and education community in New Jersey,” said **Dr. Beth Simone Noveck, Chief Innovation Officer for the State of New Jersey**. “This page is just a first step, and we look forward to hearing from the community how we can best serve them, working with our colleagues in social services and education to best provide access to services, especially for vulnerable youth, and using data to continually improve this mental health resource.”

The Children’s System of Care has recently seen an uptick in activity – an increase of 30% over usual demand for services in September.

Behavioral signs indicating a more serious issue can include:

- prolonged or recurring opposition and aggression,
- property damage and disrespect,
- feelings of anxiety or depression,
- a pattern or prolonged lying or fighting,
- stealing or substance use,
- or running away or engaging in acts of self-harm.

## Governor Phil Murphy

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