

## Data Trends

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From the Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health,  
Tampa, Florida...

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October 10, 2003, is World Mental Health Day: Emotional and Behavioral  
Disorders of Children and Adolescents.

This is the second year in a row in which the mental health needs of  
children and adolescents has been selected as the theme for World Mental  
Health Day. Furthermore, this is the third time (out of seven) that the  
theme of children's mental health has been chosen for this annual event.  
Although there is much work to be done, the fact that children's mental  
health needs are an increasing focus of worldwide concern is  
encouraging. According to the World Health Organization, up to 20% of  
children and adolescents worldwide suffer from an impairing mental  
illness, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among these  
youth. For more information about World Mental Health Day, sponsored by  
the World Federation for Mental Health, visit the WMHD website, at:  
[www.wfmh.org/wmhd.html](http://www.wfmh.org/wmhd.html)

The following address by Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi  
Annan, was delivered to the U.N. on October 6, on the occasion of World  
Mental Health Day, October 10, 2003.

"This year's Mental Health Day focuses on the special needs of some of  
the world's most vulnerable individuals--children and adolescents with  
mental, emotional and behavioral disorders. The burdens associated with  
these disorders are increasingly understood as a threat to the healthy  
development and well-being of children and adolescents worldwide. These  
young people--who are already so deeply vulnerable--may be subjected to  
stigma and discrimination; they may receive inadequate care; they may  
not have adequate opportunities for education; they may never get the  
chance to build the future which they, like all young people, deserve.  
Developing and developed countries alike have a duty to do all they can  
to ease these burdens, by improving diagnosis, treatment, public  
awareness and education. Governments must live up to their obligation  
under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child--the most  
widely ratified international legal instrument in history--to ensure  
'the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and  
physical abilities to their fullest potential.' On this World Mental  
Health Day, let us rededicate ourselves to translating into reality the  
rights of children as enshrined in the Convention. Let us vow to give  
the mental health of young people all the attention it deserves."

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If you missed previous Data Trends publications, visit the main Data  
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