

About Universal Mental Health Screening in Illinois Public Schools

In 2025, a law passed in Illinois to implement universal mental health screenings in schools.

What does this law mean?

Illinois public schools will begin offering free, yearly mental health screenings to all students in grades 3 through 12, starting in the 2027–28 school year. These short screenings check in on your child's emotional and mental well-being, similar to how schools already check vision and hearing.

What is a mental health screening?

Screenings help check for possible issues that have not yet been identified. Screenings do not diagnose a problem, but can help provide information on whether additional evaluation is needed.

Screenings are one way to identify concerns early and support kids before problems get bigger.



My school already does screening – how will this change?

Some schools/school districts already have screenings in place. This law supports screenings and makes sure they are done in a similar way.

Does my child have to be screened?

No. Parents/guardians can opt out at any time. Participation is completely voluntary. You'll receive information from your school before screenings begin, and instructions on how to decline if you choose.

What kinds of questions are asked during the screenings?

Screenings may cover questions around:

- Mood or behavior changes
- Anxiety, sadness, or anger
- Sleep and energy levels
- Stress at home or school
- Safety

Questions will be age-appropriate.

What happens if the screening shows a concern?

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is working to develop guidance for districts that will specify the next steps for when a screening detects a concern. These next steps might include:

- Being contacted by the school.
 - Being offered referrals to behavioral health services or follow-up support.
- Your child will not be diagnosed; this is a screening, not a medical evaluation. The goal is to identify early signs and connect families to care before a crisis develops.

How can your pediatrician help?

As pediatricians, we know mental health is a part of your child's overall health. We can help determine if any follow-up is needed, and we are here to be a part of the process. Connect with us at any time!

Will this affect my child's school record or privacy?

No. Results are confidential:

- They will not go on academic records or be shared with insurance companies.
- Schools must follow privacy laws that pertain to information in schools and health care settings.
- You control who sees the results outside the school system.

What is the BEACON Portal?

Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation (BEACON) is a statewide care navigation system that helps families find local mental health resources and providers, schedule appointments, and learn about supports available in IL.

If your child needs follow-up, schools can help you access BEACON.

When does this begin?

Some districts already offer screenings, but all districts will be required to offer screenings during the 2027-28 school year.

What should I do now?

Talk to your child about mental health in the same way you do about physical health.

Ask your child how they are feeling emotionally—especially about school, friendships, and stress. If you already have concerns, speak with their pediatrician or school counselor now. Visit [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information and resources around mental health.