

Pediatric Mental Health Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

February is Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Awareness Month. Use this month to have conversations with patients about warning signs, how they can and should expect respect from anyone they are in relationships with, and have age-appropriate conversations about dating and sex. [Here](#) is more information from the AAP about this topic, including next steps should a patient be experiencing dating violence.

HealthyChildren.Org articles you can share with patients, parents and caregivers:

- [Signs of Teen Dating Violence](#)
- [Expect Respect: Healthy Relationship Tips for Teens](#)
- [Dating & Sex Resource List for Parents](#)



Upcoming ICAAP Webinars on Pediatric Mental Health

🕒 **February 25 at 12pm**

Adverse Social Experiences: Prevention and the Pediatrician's Role

Dr. Sonya Dinizulu will discuss how community violence and trauma shape children's health and how pediatricians and other healthcare providers play a role in preventing and responding to trauma. Dr. Dinizulu will also cover the work of the UChicago REACT program. [Register here!](#)

🕒 **March 20 at 12pm**

Early Childhood Development and Mental Health in the Context of Immigration

In collaboration with Reach Out and Read Illinois, Dr. Elizabeth Erickson will review effects of migration-related trauma on early childhood development and opportunities to promote resilience in young immigrant children. [Register here!](#)

🕒 **April 7 at 12pm**

Effects of ACEs on Early Relational Health and Clinical Considerations

In collaboration with Reach Out and Read Illinois, Dr. Amy Shriver will explore how ACEs affect Early Relational Health and share ideas for supporting families who have experienced trauma. [Register here!](#)

🕒 **April 9 at 12pm**

Supporting Mental Health Needs in LGBTQ+ Youth

Join us on April 9, 2026, for a webinar on Supporting Mental Health Needs in LGBTQIA+ Youth led by Dr. Cherie P. Dhar. Understand protective factors, the disproportionately high rates of suicide risk among LGBTQ+ youth and best practices in supporting the mental health needs of this important population. [Register here!](#)

Register for the Pediatric Mental Health Conference *Now!*

Join Us for Our In-Person Conference

Date: May 7, 2026, 7:45 am - 4:15 pm

Location: Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center,
1306 N Berkeley Ave, Peoria, IL 61603

Admission: \$25

Ideal for: Pediatricians • Family Physicians • Allied Health Professionals • Social Workers • Professionals Providing Pediatric Mental Health Care

Earn: 6 hours of
CME/CE or Social
Work Credit



Maximize Your Expertise & Build Confidence in Pediatric Mental Health Care

Engage with pediatric mental health experts, connect with colleagues from across the state, and streamline your clinical practice to help improve mental health outcomes for all children in Illinois.

- ✔ Build trauma-informed care strategies into your practice
- ✔ Enhance skills in addressing mental health issues in younger children (<11 years)
- ✔ Learn effective strategies for collaboration with schools
- ✔ Gain confidence in ADHD screening, diagnosis, and management
- ✔ Identify and address barriers to pediatric mental health care
- ✔ Better understand substance misuse screening and intervention
- ✔ Navigate legal considerations in pediatric mental health



Book Your Stay

We have secured a room block at the Courtyard by Marriott Peoria for attendees seeking overnight accommodations.

See our special booking rates and secure your room!

Book Online: use the [booking link](#) or access the booking link on bit.ly/mh-con

Deadline: to secure a room and discounted rate, all reservations must be made by **Monday, April 6.**

Hotel Address: 1928 West War Memorial Drive Peoria, Illinois 61614



Register Today

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/2026-mh-con to register online.



The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is accredited by the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics designates this live conference for a maximum of 6 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Medical Assistants can submit Certificates of Attendance to their accrediting board to claim credit for participation in the live conference.





Maximize Your Pediatric Mental Health Expertise

ECHO-Chicago Pediatric Series

ECHO-Chicago (Extension for Community Health Outcomes) is a statewide live virtual online workforce training and capacity-building program housed at the University of Chicago that focuses on promoting use of evidence-based best practices in clinical and non-clinical settings. The aim of ECHO-Chicago is to reduce health disparities and build community expertise on various topics by expanding knowledge and skills

Common Pediatric Problems in Schools

-  Wednesdays beginning February 4th for 12 sessions (8-9 am CT)
-  **Target audience:** school nurses and school-based health center providers

Behavioral Health Issues in Middle Childhood

-  Wednesdays beginning March 4th for 12 sessions (8-9 am CT)

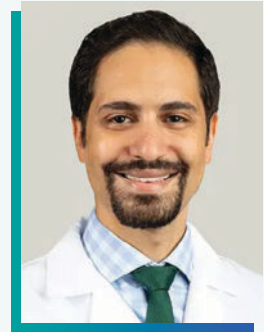
Pediatric ADHD & Autism

Details are not yet finalized but registration is open.

Common Pediatric Problems in Primary Care

Details not yet finalized but registration is open

[Register Here!](#)



Peer Advisor Spotlight

Nabil Abou Baker, MD, FAAP

Dr. Nabil Abou Baker attended medical school at Michigan State University College of Medicine and completed a combined Medicine-Pediatrics (Med-Peds) residency at Rutgers University New Jersey Medical School, where he also served as chief resident. He has presented nationally and been published pertaining to pediatric suicide and mental health in the United States. Regionally, he is the Illinois Suicide Prevention Co-Ambassador for the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He led several pediatric suicide prevention ECHOs for pediatricians and other providers. In addition, Dr. Abou Baker works with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance to improve suicide rates statewide.

Connect with ICAAP Mental Health Peer Advisors [here!](#)



New Pediatric Anxiety QI Project

EARN MOC PART IV POINTS

In partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) is recruiting primary health care clinicians to join a 5-month learning collaborative and quality improvement (QI) project focused on anxiety. The goal of this project is to enhance identification and management of pediatric anxiety in primary care by implementing standardized screening processes, structured follow-up, and education using quality improvement tools.

Practices must provide primary care to patients aged 11-17 in Illinois, complete monthly de-identified retrospective chart reviews, and submit monthly PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) worksheets. Clinical teams will engage in monthly educational sessions including strategies for treating anxiety in the pediatric primary care setting, validated screening tools, differential diagnoses, medication management, CBT and other tools, and more.

This project builds on ICAAP's 2025 Anxiety Quality Improvement Project. While some foundational topics overlap, the measures, tools, and improvement work are **new and expanded.**



When

Sessions will be held on ZOOM on the following Thursdays at 8:00am CST: **February 12, March 12, April 16, May 14, and June 11.***

**Participants must attend at least 3 out of 5 webinars to share data and best practices across participating sites to earn 25 MOC points.*



Benefits of Participating

- Improve access to quality care for patients affected by anxiety.
- Increase knowledge regarding best practices for identifying and managing anxiety in pediatric patients.
- Network and problem-solve with others.
- Earn American Board of Pediatrics Part 4 Maintenance of Certification (MOC)** credit and CME credit** (**pending approval).



Project Requirements

January 2026:

- Submit online registration
- Receive onboarding materials

February - June 2026:

- Attend one session per month
- Conduct monthly de-identified chart reviews
- Conduct PDSA cycles

July 2026:

- Complete project evaluation survey
- Participation credits awarded (MOC 4 and CME, if eligible)

Register **here** or by scanning the QR code by February 6, 2026.

For more information, contact Lauren lbarnfield@illinoisAAP.com.





Resources

New 988 Lifeline Fact Sheets & Social Media Resources From SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released new 988 Lifeline Fact Sheets and Social Media Resources!

- Updated [988 Fact Sheet](#): an easy-to-share overview of what 988 is and what people can expect when contacting 988
- [988 & 911 Fact Sheet](#): provides a high-level overview to support clear communication about when each service is the right fit
- [988 Partner Toolkit](#): complimentary social media assets that make it easy to share accurate information across your social media channels

Additional Resources

- NEW STUDY - *The New England Journal of Medicine*
Mental Health Outcomes in Children after Parental Firearm Injury
[Read Study](#)
- ARTICLE - *Reuters*
Meta, TikTok, YouTube to stand trial on youth addiction claims
[Read Article](#)

New From the AAP

Helping kids navigate the ‘digital ecosystem’

Today's children experience the rapidly expanding digital world even before they can grasp an electronic tablet. In a new policy statement and accompanying technical report, the AAP calls for a systems-wide approach and support for families whose children have entered the digital world.

[Policy Statement](#) and [Technical Report](#): “Digital Ecosystems, Children and Adolescents”

A framework for improved outcomes in emergency departments

An updated joint policy statement from the AAP, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Surgeons and Emergency Nurses Association serves as a resource for the leadership of emergency departments as they improve readiness for the care of children.

[Policy Statement](#) and [Technical Report](#): “Pediatric Readiness in the Emergency Department”

