



FAMILY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Employers Guide:

Pediatric Behavioral Health Benefits

Learn how Competitive Health's Family Behavioral Health solution helps working parents and caregivers get the help they need.

From the Creator of Family Behavioral Health

Supporting Families

When my husband and I needed behavioral support for our son Matteo, I had a very steep learning curve. From finding the right specialists and learning what course of treatment to pursue to keeping up with changing treatment plans as our son's needs changed — all of this was overwhelming for us. We felt lost and hopeless, and like the millions of families struggling to navigate this broken system, our own mental health was starting to take a nosedive.

For many working parents and caregivers, balancing the demands of a full-time job and the complexities of seeking care for their child can be just too much. Some of us even end up having to make the difficult decision to pull back from work in order to help our children.

What my family went through is all too common. Even before Covid, a remarkable 20% of children had a diagnosable behavioral health issue (and that's not including those who are undiagnosed), but only 20% of those children receive any form of treatment.¹ Those numbers have spiked during Covid: Nationwide, mental health emergency departments saw a 24% increase in visits for kids ages 5 to 11 between April and October of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019.² This is just the beginning of a coming wave of pediatric behavioral health needs.

We're excited to see so many employers embracing the benefits of pediatric behavioral health support. By working together to find a solution, our families can all start living happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives. We've created this employer's guide to pediatric behavioral health benefits not only to help fellow parents, caregivers, and coworkers, but most importantly, our children. I hope you'll join us in giving families the support they need and deserve.

Employer Solutions

The time has come for employers to support families with the same focus, energy, and dollars we invested in employee mental health a decade ago. Instead of forcing parents to choose between their work or their kids, employers need to offer a solution that connects families with the specialized help they need.

- Creator of the Family Behavioral Health Solution



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



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Recognizing the Crisis

Just as Americans started to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, a different health crisis began making headlines. In April 2021, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia reported a waiting list of up to 50 patients per day for mental health beds. The next month, Colorado officials declared “a pediatric mental health state of emergency,” noting a 72% increase in behavioral health emergency department visits. Children’s Health in Dallas and Plano soon followed suit, revealing a similar surge.

These trends affect not just children, but their parents and caretakers too. Employees with children are dropping out of the workforce in record numbers. Since the pandemic began, 40% of caregivers have had to leave their jobs or reduce their hours.² Around 10 million American mothers living with their school-age children were not working at the start of 2021 — a 1.4 million increase over the previous year.³



Tip from our Chief Psychiatric Officer

As in-person classes start up again, it's going to be hard for a lot of children and families, especially if some kids are still remote and some are not vaccinated.

The behavioral health needs of many of these kids aren't just going to go away. If anything, we're seeing an increased need to help kids and teens adapt in the coming months and years.

How Did We Get Here?

The past year has brought children's behavioral health concerns to a crisis point. When the world went into lockdown in early 2020, most children stopped going to school in person or even seeing their friends in real life. This deprived them of critical opportunities to develop social and emotional skills. These kids had to rely almost solely on their families for social, emotional, and academic support.

Meanwhile, parents and caregivers started burning themselves out as they tried to give 100% to both their children and workplaces. Between April and October 2020, emergency rooms witnessed a surge in mental health related visits from kids between the ages of 5 to 17.⁴

1 IN 5

CHILDREN

One in five children have a diagnosed behavioral health need.¹

80%

OF CHILDREN

80% of children are not getting the mental health care they need.¹

And What Happened?

Kids who had never struggled with their behavioral health before became more vulnerable. Meanwhile, kids who were already struggling fell further behind. Parents and caregivers didn't know where to go to find the help they needed. Affordable, quality care was hard to find, especially as a shortage of care providers had created long patient waitlists. Employers are only now becoming aware of these long-standing issues.

Unfortunately, the problem is not going away. Studies show that the social isolation and loneliness children and teens experience can increase the likelihood of depression as many as nine years later.⁵ For many working parents and caregivers, that means they'll need reliable help for their children for many years to come.

Children and teens currently experiencing social isolation and loneliness have an increased likelihood of depression as many as 9 years later⁵



17M+

CHILDREN IN THE U.S.

Over 17 million children in the U.S. have or have had a psychiatric disorder⁶



8,300

OR FEWER PRACTITIONERS

There are fewer than 8,300 practicing child and adolescent psychiatrists⁷

Families are Bearing the Costs – For Now

For many working parents and caregivers, there is no easy way to get behavioral health care for their kids due to barriers of access, affordability, quality of care, visibility, and the fear of stigma when seeking help. First, there's the shortage of qualified professionals, which can leave caregivers struggling to find an in-network provider or getting stuck on long waiting lists.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, nearly every state has a severe shortage of child psychiatrists.⁸ As a result, families are 10 times more likely to go to an out-of-network pediatric behavioral health care provider.⁹ That's expensive and stressful and can also result in unhappy, distracted, and burned out employees with children.

Then there's the stigma surrounding the issue. In a study of parents with children experiencing anxiety, 41.3% of parents named stigma as a barrier to seeking care.¹⁰ These parents showed internalized stigma about mental health problems, had negative associations with mental health treatment, and feared their kids may be treated unfairly in the future due to a diagnosis.

A national study also revealed that American adults have a stigma around children receiving mental health care. Of those surveyed, 45% said a child receiving care would experience rejection at school and 35% said getting care for a child would make a parent feel like a failure. In addition, 57% were skeptical about confidentiality, and 45% said the child would suffer as an adult if others found out about the care received in childhood.¹¹

CHALLENGES PARENTS & CAREGIVERS FACE



High health care costs



Long waitlists to see specialists



Untreated concerns



Difficulty navigating care



Complicated paperwork



Lack of care coordination

FAMILIES ARE 10 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO GO TO AN OUT OF NETWORK PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER⁹



Stigmas in America

Whether a child is experiencing a clinical condition, such as a major depressive episode, or a subclinical condition like tantrums (or, as is the case with 60% of children with ADHD, multiple conditions at the same time¹²), understanding how to find specific help and treatment plans, as well as coordinating between those different specialists and treatments, can be overwhelming for caregivers without professional guidance. Trying to ensure that a child's speech therapist, coach, and pediatrician stay in touch or coordinate their efforts is a professional undertaking in itself.

WHAT STIGMAS DO AMERICAN ADULTS HAVE AROUND MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN?

35%

Of parents believe that getting care for a child would make a parent feel as though they have failed

45%

Of parents believe a child receiving care would experience rejection at school

45%

Of parents believe a child would suffer as an adult if others find out about care received in childhood

47%

Of parents are skeptical about confidentiality around behavioral health care¹⁰

More Likely to be Depressed

Parents and caregivers of a child with behavioral health needs are 50% more likely to experience depression¹⁴

Higher Turnover

Parents and caregivers face increased pressure, with 40% of caregivers needing to leave their jobs or reduce their hours since the pandemic started.³

Increased Use of Employee Benefits

When the burden and stress on caregivers increases, it often gets expressed through the caregivers' increased use of their own benefits. This may be associated with productivity loss and high staff turnover.

If pediatric behavioral health care continues to stay reactive as opposed to proactive, it just becomes more costly for the employer.

How children's behavioral health affects employees

Half of parents and caregivers say they're losing productivity at work in trying to care for their kids' behavioral health needs.¹³

A child with behavioral health concerns - whether tantrums, speech therapy needs, trouble sleeping, or other conditions has a big effect on how working parents and caregivers function. Searching for providers, coordinating care appointments, and managing untreated issues are all time and energy-intensive tasks that can significantly sap employee productivity. In addition, a child's behavioral health issues can also affect the mental health of their caregivers.

In fact, parents and caregivers of a child with a behavioral health need are 50% more likely to experience depression.¹⁴



Finding Solutions for Your Employees

The benefits of offering pediatric behavioral health benefits to your workforce are numerous — so long as those benefits truly provide a modernized, comprehensive solution that addresses the central problems working parents face: long waitlists, high costs, low quality of care, and stigma.

Working families need multidisciplinary, individualized, and proactive solutions, and they need them now. Without support from their employers, caregivers often have to pull back from their duties at work in order to support their kids. But organizations can improve retention and boost productivity by adding excellent pediatric behavioral care as part of the employee benefits package.

FOUR CRUCIAL QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE BENEFIT:

A Knowledgeable, Multidisciplinary Care Team

Compared to adults, kids who are struggling with their behavioral health are more likely to have multiple conditions at the same time. In fact, 6 in 10 kids diagnosed with ADHD have at least one other mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder.¹²

This means that successful treatment isn't about finding one specialist; it's about finding a team of them. A great pediatric behavioral health program makes it simple for coaches, therapists, speech pathologists, physicians, and other specialists to work together and provide the customized care each child needs.

Support for the Whole Family, Including Caregivers

Because parents and caregivers are a big influence on a child's wellbeing, they're also an important part of their child's behavioral care team. A great pediatric behavioral health program recognizes that reality and makes it easy for families to be a part of their child's treatment.

The best pediatric behavioral health benefits offer a dyadic care model that include both the child and their caregiver. During care visits with their child, caregivers have the opportunity to ask questions of professionals and receive customized support, which studies have shown triples the likelihood of positive outcomes.¹⁶

Timely Care When, and How a Child Needs it

Children are constantly growing and changing — as are their behavioral health needs. A great pediatric behavioral health plan keeps up with each child by staying flexible in terms of the kind of care it can provide.

Whether a child is struggling with tantrums and could benefit from coaching, or is attempting to recover from depression and requires clinical therapeutic sessions, or needs to focus on speech therapy, a great program is always ready to adapt to each child's rapidly changing needs.

Ongoing Support for Children, Parents, and Caregivers

Kids need continued support, both in the form of praise and positive reinforcement. Successful behavioral treatment plans too require a high level of attention and one-on-one time.

A great program makes it easy for parents to remember to check in on their kids, whether that's in the form of a reminder notification to perform a certain medically recommended task or a note to simply ask them how they are feeling at a given time of day. By working closely together, caregivers and an excellent pediatric behavioral health program can help kids thrive.

60%

OF CHILDREN

60% of kids with ADHD have at least one other mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder¹²

40%

STRESS DECREASE

40% decrease in parental stress associated with training programs that help parents manage their children's behavioral health¹⁵

84%

OF PARENTS

84% of parents who accessed teletherapy for their child said they had a positive experience

Uncommon Support for Common Family Challenges

Family Behavioral Health is the first full-family behavioral health solution built specifically to care for kids, teens, and parents across a range of common family challenges. With multidisciplinary care teams, personalized family system care, evidence-based care delivery, and extraordinary technology, Competitive Health partners with employers and health plans to support families across a range of behavioral health needs.

Tip from our Chief Psychiatric Officer

We need to support families that may not need clinical care but would feel more comfortable engaging with self-guided care or skills-based coaching.

That approach is much more scalable and something that can connect parents to care quickly and get them engaged. It allows you to really personalize, tailor, and match people with the right level and type of care rather than waiting until a crisis.



**CONTACT CHI
SALES TEAM**

On-the-go Access

Our library of interactive guides helps employees navigate a wide range of behavioral health concerns, whenever they arise.

Skills-Based Coaching for Everyday Stressors

From breathing techniques to verbal coaching, exercises can help de-escalate children's tantrums and ease sleeping disruptions.

Rapid Access to Caring Professionals

A roster of speech therapists, psychiatrists, and therapists who specialize in depression, anxiety, ADHD, and other behavioral challenges are ready and available to meet with each child

¹ CDC

² CDC

³ FlexJobs Survey

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau

⁵ Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

⁶ Child Mind Institute

⁷ Association of American Medical Colleges

⁸ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

⁹ Milliman Research Report

¹⁰ Child and Youth Services Review

¹¹ Psychiatric Services

¹² CDC

¹³ Brighline COVID Behavioral Health Indicator (COBI)

¹⁴ Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

¹⁵ Journal of Attention Disorders

¹⁶ Child Trends

¹⁷ Ipsos