

## **Parent information for Suicide/Depression Awareness Week**

The week of September 20-24, 2021 has been designated as Suicide/Depression Awareness Week for Brevard Public Schools. There are as many misconceptions about childhood depression as there are about children in general. Children of all ages can experience depression; however, it will appear differently across the age groups. Factors that identify children at risk for depression/suicide include family history, loss of a loved one before the age of 12, violence, decreased family ties and increased family pressures.

Unlike adults, who have the ability to seek assistance on their own, children must rely on parents, teachers, or other caregivers to recognize their suffering and get them the treatment they need. Unfortunately, in some severe cases of depression, it can lead to attempts of suicide or completed suicides. Young children and adolescents are impulsive and attempting suicide can be an impulsive act. As reported by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 2014, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the 2nd leading cause of death of children ages 10-25.

Parents are the most important adults in a child's life and this influence is what helps a sad child become resilient. Parents are encouraged to be role models in problem solving skills and nonviolent ways to handle disputes. Engaging your child in family activities as well as the community is a great way to help a child who may feel depressed. If you feel your child is depressed and need assistance, please contact your school counselor, your child's pediatrician or call 211 or 321-632-6688 (a resource for community agencies), or 1-800-662-4357 (a National free and confidential mental health helpline available 24/7).