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Truth is, it's best if they know, Depression is less likely in children who are hip to what peers think of them -- good or bad.

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EXCERPT:

Some politicians, public health officials, mental health activists and pharmaceutical companies have worked to establish mental-health screening programs in schools and the community. Those initiatives, including a model program designed at Columbia University called TeenScreen, aim to steer kids who are more likely to develop depression toward help before their emotional difficulties lead them to risky behaviors, academic failure or suicide attempts. In recent years, six states — Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Iowa and New Mexico — have moved to adopt programs that screen schoolchildren for warning signs of mental illness, including depression. Elsewhere, individual school districts have followed suit.

Those efforts have proven controversial. Many parents fear their children will be labeled as mentally ill and marked for special attention because they have expressed sentiments typical of adolescents. Others caution that there are few services and scant psychiatric help available for the millions of children that could be identified. And many suspect such screens are drug company-sponsored efforts to build the market for antidepressants.

Researchers and clinicians, meanwhile, say they are far from having developed accurate predictors of a child developing depression. The younger the child, the murkier the crystal ball.