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### **New centre to treat children under five for depression**

A NATIONAL centre to treat children as young as three for depression is to be set up at a south London hospital.

Experts at the Institute of Psychiatry, which is part of the Maudsley Hospital in Denmark Hill, blame the increased number of children under five who are in need of therapy on family break-up, abuse and genetic factors.

The specialist centre for treating child and adolescent depression will open at the Maudsley this year to deal with complex cases. Doctors say that a third of all current inpatient

admissions are now for child and adolescent depression.

Professor Eric Taylor, head of child and adolescent psychiatry at the institute, said: "This is not just tantrums—we're talking about disturbed children who are not going through normal development.

"Children display their depression and instability differently from adults. What is significant is the frequency and intensity of their outbursts."

More than 8,000 children aged between five and 10 have been diagnosed with a serious mental disorder. An estimated one in 10 children and teenagers develop mental problems.

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