



PARENTAL PULL-OUT

Parents: Please remove this centrefold carefully to avoid damaging the staples!

Positive Emotions SPHE Programme - Parent Guide

This short booklet is designed to give parents a brief introduction to the “*Weaving Well-Being*” programme and to help them support their children as they complete the *Positive Emotions* (3rd Class) section of the programme. The *Weaving Well-Being* programme is a well-being programme for children specifically designed to promote positive mental health and flourishing in children. The skills are based on current research from the field of *Positive Psychology*.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is concerned with the science of well-being, personal growth and resilience. It is founded on the concept of identifying and developing personal strengths. Positive Psychology uses evidence-based activities which help people to flourish, grow and engage with life on an optimal level whenever possible. Our lessons and activities introduce children to many of these strategies and activities which can empower them to become active participants **in creating, maintaining and boosting positive mental health** throughout their lives. Activities have been designed in accordance with the SPHE curriculum, and the Guidelines on Well-Being issued by the Department of Education and Skills (2015).

The *Positive Emotions* programme consists of ten lessons which are designed to promote and cultivate positive emotions using five specific strategies. These are: ***Expressing Gratitude, Understanding and Experiencing Flow Activities, Performing Acts of Kindness, Noticing Positive Events*** and finally ***Keeping Fit and Healthy***. Each strategy has a specific ‘tool’ or ‘ingredient’ - represented by an image to help the children understand and remember the concepts involved. Each child has a Pupil Book, which gradually builds into a highly personal portfolio which reflects their use and understanding of each tool.

Why are Positive Emotions important and how can we cultivate them in our children?

A growing body of research shows that positive emotions are linked to increased well-being across a number of areas. The benefits of genuinely felt positive emotions include increased resilience, better immune system functioning, improved creative problem-solving and enhanced feelings of connection to others.

Research also suggests that it is the frequency, rather than the intensity of positive emotions which enhances well-being. This means that experiencing many small moments of positive emotion regularly is more important to well-being than experiencing more intense moments every so often.

In line with this research, this *Positive Emotions* programme introduces children to five evidence-based strategies through the lesson plans to boost positive emotion on a daily basis. Each of these strategies uses ingredients which make up a ***Positive Emotion Potion***. The children are given an opportunity to observe and record the effects of each strategy on their sense of well-being. After trying out all of the strategies on an individual basis, the children are then encouraged to put all of their ‘ingredients’ together and use their ***Positive Emotion Potion*** on a daily basis.

To gain maximum benefit from the tools, your child should be encouraged to use them as much as possible. There is a homework task each week which encourages practical use of the strategies and tools. In order to help and encourage your child, you may find the following information useful.





Lesson 1: What is Well-Being?

In this lesson, children discuss and learn what well-being means and the implications of taking care of our well-being in our daily lives. Children learn that well-being is linked with feeling good in both our body and mind and it allows us to cope with little problems, enjoy life and accept ourselves just as we are. Other benefits of caring for our well-being are discussed in terms of friendships and feeling connected with others, having energy and being proud of our efforts. Children are encouraged to try to remember a time when they felt any of these signs of taking care of their well-being and reconnect with that feeling.

How to support your child: Talk to your child about the importance of taking care of their well-being. Discuss why your child selected particular well-being words in their Pupil Book and what it means to them. Give examples of your own understanding of well-being words and link situations in your life to times when you took care of your own well-being. Discuss how you can care for or enhance your well-being as a family.

Lesson 2: Positive Emotions

In this lesson children discuss that all emotions or feelings are normal, natural and important. A special group of emotions called **Positive Emotions** are discussed. Understanding that it is not possible to have positive emotions all the time is examined, but children learn that having plenty of positive emotions every day can help our well-being. Scientific research showing that we should have three positive emotions to balance one negative emotion is explored.

How to support your child: Encourage your child to explain when they have felt any of the positive emotions outlined in their **Positive Emotions Pupil Book**. Give examples of times when you recall feeling any, or all of these positive emotions too. Reinforce that it is not possible to have positive emotions all the time and that all feelings, positive and negative, are normal and natural. Discuss the **Positive Emotion Tracker** in their Pupil Book each night with your child, encouraging him/her to link the positive emotion to the activity that caused that emotion.

Lesson 3: Positive Emotion Potion

In this lesson, children are introduced to the idea that there are five special activities which can boost our positive emotions. These five activities are the ingredients in a **Positive Emotion Potion**. The meaning of a potion is discussed and children are encouraged to represent how they visualise their own **Positive Emotion Potion** in art form. The positive emotions experienced in the previous week's tracker are explored and children link their favourite positive emotion to the activity completed that week.

How to support your child: Discuss the meaning of each of the positive emotions in this week's homework (**Pride, Interest, Belonging, Excitement, Amusement, Awe, Zest, Peace, Love and Gratitude**). Give examples of what might give rise to this emotion for you. Encourage your child to choose one positive emotion which is meaningful to him/her and discuss activities that will help your child feel this emotion. Discuss the benefits for your child of feeling that emotion.



Lesson 4: Ingredient 1: Attitude of Gratitude

Children are introduced to the first ingredient of the **Positive Emotion Potion - Attitude of Gratitude**. Gratitude is explained as feeling thankful for, and noticing what we have, rather than what we don't have. Children are encouraged to think about things they are lucky to have. These are recalled in terms of family, friends, home, toys, schools, pets, etc. Children think of someone in their lives who they would particularly like to thank. A plan for a Gratitude Letter is discussed and prepared. For homework your child will be writing a Gratitude Letter. Ask your child if they need any help or support with this, being mindful that the letter may be for you!



How to support your child: Discuss what an **Attitude of Gratitude** means to your child. Reinforce this concept by highlighting key things in your life for which you are thankful. These things can be as simple as noticing how someone asked you how you are, smiled at you during the day or offered assistance in some way. Remember that '*Gratitude is the best Attitude*' and there is always something to be thankful for in our day.

Lesson 5: Ingredient 2: Feel-Good-Flow

Ingredient 2 of the **Positive Emotion Potion** is explained and explored. It is identified as **Feel-Good-Flow** and is explained as getting totally involved and interested in what you are doing, concentrating on the activity and losing track of time. In this process you are enhancing your skills, or learning a new skill and feeling proud of yourself. Children identify **Flow** activities they experience both in school and in their home life. They are encouraged to participate in more of these activities and reminded that this is the second ingredient in improving their well-being through our **Positive Emotion Potion**.



How to support your child: Discuss your child's **Feel-Good-Flow** activity in their Pupil Book, identifying why they selected this activity. To help your child to reinforce the concept of **Feel-Good-Flow**, explore what the challenge was in the activity, the resulting skill acquired and the emotion created. For homework this week, encourage your child to practise their **Flow** activity for thirty minutes each day. Link your own **Feel-Good-Flow** activities to your child's, reminding your child that these activities are different for each individual and are a life-long practice to maintain and enhance our well-being.

Lesson 6: Ingredient 3: Random Acts of Kindness (R.A.K.)

The many benefits of kindness are explored in Ingredient 3 of the **Positive Emotion Potion - Random Acts of Kindness (R.A.K.)**. It is explained to children that being kind to others has a physical reaction on our bodies and makes us happier and healthier. Children discuss times when they acted in a kind manner towards another person or when someone was kind to them. This act is linked to the emotion created as a result. Traits of kind characters in children's literature are explored and children discuss kind acts they identified with.



How to support your child: For homework this coming week, encourage your child to pick a **R.A.K.** day. On this **R.A.K.** day your child should try to complete at least five acts from a given menu of **Random Acts of Kindness**. Assist your child in creating their own suggestions for what constitutes a **R.A.K.** Rate your own **R.A.K.** in order of preference from 1 to 5, highlighting to your child how it would make you feel and reminding them that your well-being is individual to you.



Lesson 7: Ingredient 4: Rainbow Moments



In this lesson children are introduced to the concept of **Rainbow Moments**. These moments relate to the little parts of our day where things go well for us, such as enjoying playing with a friend or noticing something beautiful in nature. It is explained to children that our brains naturally look for bad things in our day and with **Rainbow Moments**, we are re-training our brains to notice and pay attention to the small, simple, positive things that occur on a daily basis.

How to support your child: Discuss your child's **Rainbow Moments** in their Pupil Book, exploring which of the positive emotions identified in Lesson 2 were experienced as a result. For homework, help your child to notice and record three **Rainbow Moments** each day this week.

Lesson 8: Ingredient 5: Healthy Body, Happy Mind



The final ingredient of our **Positive Emotion Potion - Healthy Body, Happy Mind** is discussed in this lesson. Children are presented with the idea that if we take care of our bodies and keep them healthy, it can help us to feel good and consequently help our well-being. There are three key elements to **Healthy Body, Happy Mind**: Eating Healthy Food (cutting down on junk foods), Moving our Bodies (one hour per day) and Getting Enough Sleep (ten hours for a child of their age).

How to support your child: Provide opportunities to support your child with these activities. If you are driving to school, park a distance away to allow your child to walk and have the benefit of additional exercise. Perhaps try a new vegetable or fruit each day. Encourage your child to participate in a calm bedtime routine to allow the transition into sleep to occur more easily. For each day, discuss any small changes made to the feeling your child experienced during that day. Were they feeling less tired and more positive?

Lesson 9: Positive Emotion Potion - Mix and Enjoy

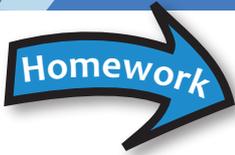
Lesson 10: Review

In these lessons, children recall and revise each of the five ingredients of the **Positive Emotion Potion**. Children examine different scenarios of the ingredients learnt and relate each one to the **Positive Emotion Potion** and to improved well-being. Children will practise some or all of the ingredients as outlined in their homework. A **Well-Being Self-Assessment Check up** is included at the back of your child's **Positive Emotions Pupil Book** for future reference, if your child needs to review this **Positive Emotions** course.

How to support your child: For homework in week nine, children are invited to see how many of the **Positive Emotion Potion** ingredients they can use each day and tick their tracker identifying their favourite ingredient. Discuss your own favourite ingredient in the **Positive Emotion Potion** with your child, reinforcing that positive emotions created for each person are individual and unique to them. Using the **Potion Tracker** in Lesson 10 (Review), children are encouraged to use some or all of the **Positive Emotion Potion** every day to support their well-being. Identifying their favourite ingredient, individual to them, is a key element of this activity.

Weaving Well-Being

THE MORE YOU WEAVE... THE BETTER YOU FEEL!



Helping your child with Weaving Well-Being: Positive Emotions: Homework Activities

Lesson 1 Homework: Happy Families (page 3)

Think and talk at home about simple things you like to do with your family which can help everybody's well-being.

Write three of them here:

This week, try to do some or all of them. Tick each one if you do it.

Next week we will talk about how it felt!

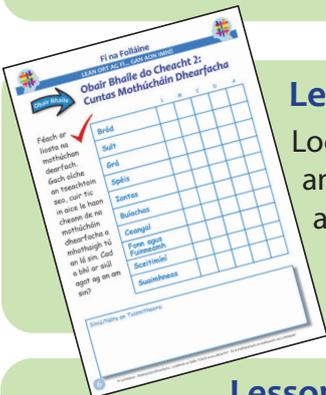
Parental Signature/comment: Parents should sign this box to show that they have discussed each homework activity and to give any feedback if they wish.



Lesson 2 Homework: Positive Emotion Tracker (page 6)

Look at this list of positive emotions. Each evening this week, put a tick beside any positive emotion which you felt that day. Think about what you were doing at that time.

Tracker List: Pride, Amusement, Love, Interest, Awe, Gratitude, Belonging, Zest, Excitement and Peace.



Lesson 3 Homework: (page 9)

Choose one positive emotion that you would like to feel more of, from the list below. Choose three activities which you think would help you to do that. Try some or all of them out!

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Pride | Interest | Belonging | Excitement |
| Amusement | Awe | Zest | Peace |
| Love | Gratitude | | |

Write three of them here:



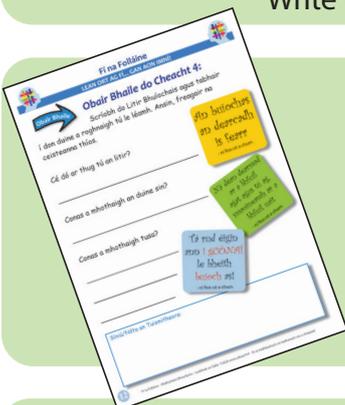
Lesson 4 Homework: (page 12)

Write your letter of gratitude and hand it or read it to the person you chose. Then answer the questions below.

Who did you give the letter to?

How did it make them feel?

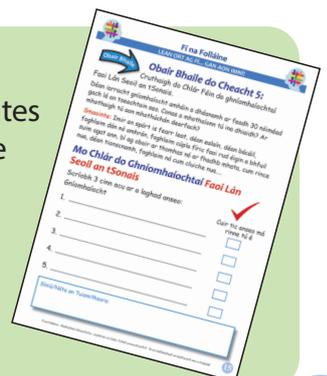
How did it make you feel?



Lesson 5 Homework: (page 15)

Design your own Feel-Good-Flow Menu. Try to do one activity for at least 30 minutes each day this week. Think about how you feel afterwards. Did you feel any positive emotions?

Ideas: Play your favourite sport, art and craft, baking, learn a poem or a song, memorise some facts about something you are interested in, read, work on a puzzle or maths problem, make up a new dance, do a project, learn or design a new game... My **Feel-Good-Flow** Menu. Write at least three of them here:



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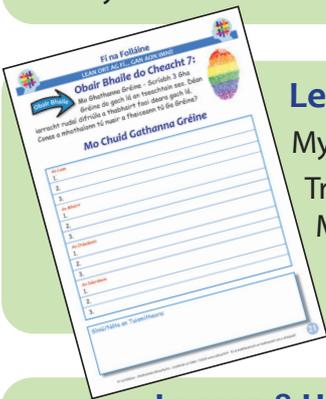
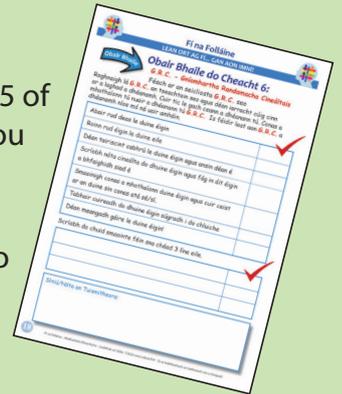
Lesson 6 Homework: (page 18)

R.A.K. - Random Acts of Kindness

Look at this checklist of R.A.K. Pick a R.A.K. day this week and try to do at least 5 of them. Tick each one you do. Think about how doing a R.A.K. makes you feel. You can tick any R.A.K. more than once!

List in table: Give someone a compliment; Share Something; Offer to help someone and then do it; Write a kind note to someone and leave it for them to find; Think about how somebody is feeling and ask them how they are; Invite someone to join your game; Give someone a smile!

Write your own ideas in the next three lines.



Lesson 7 Homework: (page 21)

My Rainbow Moments – Write three Rainbow Moments for each day this week.

Try to notice different things each day. Think about how noticing your Rainbow Moments makes you feel.

Monday 1, 2, 3. Tuesday 1, 2, 3. Wednesday 1, 2, 3. Thursday 1, 2, 3.

Lesson 8 Homework: (page 24)

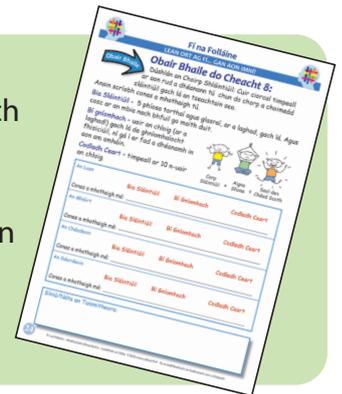
Healthy Body Challenge: Circle each thing you do to keep your body healthy each day this week. Then write how you felt.

Healthy Eating - at least 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables, and no junk!

Move Your Body – at least one hour of physical activity, it doesn't have to be all in one go. Proper Sleep – around 10 hours.

Table: Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, How I felt: _____

Healthy Eating Move your Body Proper Sleep



Lesson 9 Homework: Positive Emotion Potion Challenge! (page 27)

See how many of the Positive Emotion Potion ingredients you can use each day this week. Tick the box for any ingredient you used that day.

My favourite ingredient is _____ because _____

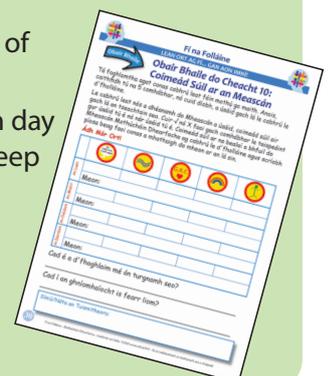
Lesson 10 Homework: Potion Tracker (page 30)

Now you have learned how to help yourself to feel good, it's up to you to use some or all of your ingredients every day to help your well-being.

To help you get into the habit of using your Potion, keep track of how you are doing each day this week. Put a tick or an X under each ingredient to show whether you used it or not. Keep track of the ways that your Positive Emotion Potion is helping your well-being by writing what your overall mood was, for that day. **Good Luck!**

What did I learn from this experiment? _____

What is my favourite activity and why? _____



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Well-Being Self-Assessment Check-Up

These Weaving Well-Being lessons have been designed to help you to notice and improve your well-being. Your teacher may ask you to fill it in from time to time to help you keep track of your own well-being. If you need help in a certain area, think of ways to improve on it and see if they work. Don't forget to ask your parents, friends and family for help, support and advice! Enjoy weaving your well-being!



= I'm doing well in this area

Well-Being Signs



= I'm doing okay, room for improvement

Date



= I am not doing well and may need support or help in this area

Date

Date

Date

I feel like I have plenty of energy to do the things I want or need to do.							
I feel like I get along with others most of the time.							
I know and use my strengths often.							
I regularly feel grateful for many things in my life.							
I feel that I have ways to cope with disappointments and problems.							
I often feel proud of myself for doing my best.							
I often help others.							
I can accept that I am OK just as I am.							



Weaving Well-Being



THE MORE YOU WEAVE... THE BETTER YOU FEEL!

Here are the five special activities which can boost our positive emotions.



Ingredient 1: Attitude of Gratitude

An **Attitude of Gratitude** reminds us to be thankful and appreciate everything good in our lives.



Ingredient 2: Feel-Good-Flow

Feel-Good-Flow activities give us a challenge and allow us to practise a skill.



Ingredient 3: Random Acts of Kindness

Through **Random Acts of Kindness**, we help others and also help ourselves.



Ingredient 4: Rainbow Moments

Rainbow Moments give us a chance to train our minds to notice all the little positive parts of each day.



Ingredient 5: Healthy Body, Happy Mind

Healthy Body, Happy Mind reminds us that by keeping our bodies healthy, we can feel happier!