



WELCOME TO WELL-BEING - BOOK C: FEELING GOOD WITH MO AND KO!

Parent/Guardian/Carer Information Leaflet



A video by the author, introducing the **Welcome to Well-Being** programme to parents/carers/guardians, is available on: www.otb.ie/w2w-parent

This short 4-page leaflet is designed to give an introduction to the **Welcome to Well-being** programme and to help support children at home as they complete their pupil book **Feeling good with Mo and Ko!**

Welcome to Well-Being is a 3-level programme that aims to promote positive mental health, resilience and flourishing in children. It is based on concepts from Positive Psychology and emotional regulation. The programme has been designed in accordance with the Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) curriculum from the Department of Education. In each lesson, Mo and Ko (2 small aliens from the planet Zo) introduce children to an idea or skill to help them to feel good. They also give them a challenge to encourage them to use the skill over the course of the week.

Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology is the science of well-being, thriving and resilience (*Seligman, 2011*). It is underpinned by concepts including positive relationships, self-worth, self-compassion, character strengths such as kindness, bravery, humour and fairness and positive emotions such as gratitude, love, joy, hope and pride. It uses evidence-based activities to help us to grow, reach our potential and flourish in life. It makes sense to introduce these concepts and skills to children from as early an age as possible.

Emotional Regulation

Emotional Regulation is the process of consciously managing your own emotions for personal growth, fulfilment and goal satisfaction (*Mayer & Salovey, 1997*). Emotional regulation skills are important in building resilience. By giving children tools and strategies to cope with their strong emotions, we can also build their self-confidence and give them a sense of inner strength.

Emotional regulation is a process with 4 distinct parts as follows:

1. Understanding and labelling emotions
2. Accepting and expressing all emotions
3. Up-regulating positive emotions such as love, pride, joy, gratitude, humour and calm
4. Down-regulating negative emotions such as anger, sadness and worry

Supporting your child

You can support your child's well-being and emotional regulation by normalising all feelings and emotions and by reinforcing the message that *'all feelings are OK'*. Empathise with and comfort your child when they are experiencing a difficult emotion and encourage them to express how they are feeling. Some children internalise the idea that certain feelings, such as anger or frustration, are not acceptable and then try to suppress these emotions, which can then lead to emotional outbursts or feelings of shame or regret at expressing them. Try not to over-protect your child from normal feelings of disappointment, frustration or sadness – it is through experiencing these feelings, with your love and support, that they learn to cope with them. By reinforcing and modelling positive ways of accepting and processing all feelings, children can know that it is OK to have these feelings and that there are helpful ways to cope with them.

To gain most benefit from the programme, encourage your child as much as possible and support them as they try the weekly challenges. The rest of this guide provides some ideas for doing this.



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In each lesson, Mo and Ko (2 small aliens from the planet Zo) introduce children to an idea to help them feel good. They also give them a challenge to try to use the idea over the course of the week. Images of all of the challenges can be found at the back of the Pupil Book.

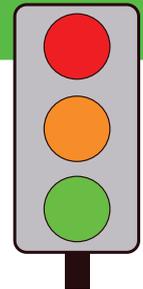
**Please note that Mo and Ko are gender-neutral, so the pronouns 'they', 'their' and 'them' are used for the small aliens in both singular and plural contexts.*

Homework:

Each lesson has a homework activity which involves reading a short poem about the lesson with your child, discussing the challenge and trying it out at home over the course of the week. There is also another homework activity for your child to reinforce the concept. There is a comment box at the end of each homework page for the parent/guardian/carer to sign and comment on if you wish.

Self-assessment traffic lights

This is an optional activity to try with your child. On each homework page there is a small set of traffic lights. Each week, discuss with your child how they feel they did with the challenge. If they feel it went well, they can circle the green light, if it went OK they circle the orange light and if they didn't do it or it didn't go well they can circle the red light.



Lesson 1: We all belong

Children are introduced to the characters Mo and Ko as two small aliens from the planet Zo who know a lot about children and want to help children to feel good about themselves. They explore how important it is to help everyone to feel like they belong and discuss ways that they can do this including asking friendly questions, sharing and being kind.

Support your child: Read the poem *It's good to be us* (on page 3) with your child this week and talk about ways that they can help others to feel like they belong. Mo and Ko's challenge to the children is for them to help everyone feel like they belong. They can draw four ways they did this on the jigsaw pieces.

Lesson 2: We can name our feelings

Your child learns that all feelings are OK and names as many as they can including furious, terrified, annoyed, proud, miserable, frightened, lonely, calm and confident. They learn it's not OK to hurt others because of our feelings.

Support your child: Read the poem *When I'm feeling* (on page 6) with your child this week and talk about how they are feeling. Remind them that all feelings are OK. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for the children to use their words to name their feelings every day. They can also draw four feelings of their choice on the blank faces provided.



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Lesson 3: We can express our feelings

Your child learns that it is important to express their feelings in helpful rather than unhelpful ways. Helpful ways include talking to someone, exercising, crying and drawing.

Support your child: Read the poem *If my feelings* (on page 9) with your child. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to express their feelings in helpful ways every day including **Name it to tame it**. You can ask them how they are feeling and help them to choose a helpful way to express it, praising and encouraging them as they do. Model this for your child too by talking to them about how you express your own feelings. Help your child to choose three ways that they expressed their feelings in a helpful way this week to record in their Pupil Book.

Lesson 4: We can feel our energy

In this lesson children learn about different levels of physical energy including low, calm, high and very high, using the image of Mo and Ko's **Energymeter**. They start to explore the link between their feelings and their energy. It is important for them to understand the interconnection between different dimensions of their well-being including physical, mental, emotional and social. They learn that all levels are OK and that some levels are more suited to certain activities than others.

Support your child: Read the poem *My energy* (on page 12) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge is for your child to feel their energy levels each day and talk about whether they are low, calm, high or very high. Support them by discussing the different levels and thinking about which levels are appropriate for particular activities. Help them with the activity in their Pupil Book in which they draw themselves showing each level of energy.

Lesson 5: We can change our energy

In this lesson children discuss the different ways that they can change their energy if they need to. To get to a calm level, they can do **Slide breathing**, do a physical exercise or use **Chill and spill**.

Support your child: Read the poem *Touch the sky* (on page 15) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge is for your child to feel their energy level each day and change it to the right level if they need to. Support them by discussing what level they are at and whether they would like to change it. Put on some calming music while they do their **Calm colouring** and perhaps join in yourself.

Lesson 6: We can do hard things

In this lesson children learn that sometimes we all have to do hard things in life. They discuss hard things that they have done before and what helps them to keep going including what they can say to themselves. They learn it's OK to make mistakes when they are doing hard things.

Support your child: Read the poem *I'm getting stronger* (on page 18) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to do hard things if they need to. Try the challenge on page 18 with them and see if it gets easier with practice.



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Lesson 7: We are good enough

Children discuss the idea that nobody is perfect and that we can't feel amazing all of the time. We all make mistakes and do things that we're not proud of sometimes. However, we have to remind ourselves that no matter what, we are *always* good enough. Children can often judge themselves very harshly and be their own worst critics, especially if they compare themselves to others. Learning to be self-compassionate from as early an age as possible is vital. Keep reminding your child that nobody is perfect and encourage them to be kind to themselves when they make mistakes.

Support your child: Read the poem *Hand to heart* (on page 21) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to remember that they are good enough, no matter what and to use *Hand to heart* to remind themselves. Support them by reminding them to use it whenever they need to.

Lesson 8: We care and share

In this lesson children discuss all the ways that we show that we care for each other and how this makes us feel.

Support your child: Read the poem *I sprinkle kindness* (on page 24) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for them to care and share every day. Support them by helping to fill in their *Care and share tracker*.

Lesson 9: We can solve our problems

Children discuss the idea that we all face problems and that we need to have a way to deal with them. They are introduced to a 4-step process to help them solve their problems – **Think, talk, plan, act**.

Support your child: Read the poem **Think, talk, plan, act** (on page 27) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to use the **Think, talk, plan, act** approach when they are faced with a problem. Support them with this by using this approach yourself and encouraging them to use it.

Lesson 10: It's good to be us

Children discuss what they like doing in class and think about all of the positives of being part of the class. They are reminded that by continuing to do Mo and Ko's challenges, they can show their best selves and make the classroom a happy place for everyone.

Support your child: Read the poem *It's good to be us* (on page 30) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to think of their **3 good things** every day as a reminder that it's good to be us.