



WELCOME TO WELL-BEING - BOOK B: GOOD TO BE ME 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 **Good to be me 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.



WELCOME TO WELL-BEING - BOOK B: GOOD TO BE ME WITH MO AND KO!

Parent/Guardian/Carer Information Leaflet

In each lesson, Mo and Ko (2 little 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 on the inside cover of the Pupil Book.

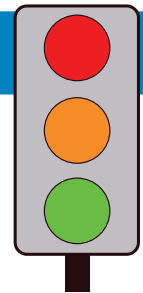
**Please note that Mo and Ko are gender-neutral, so the pronouns 'they', 'their' and 'them' are used for the little aliens in both singular and plural contexts.*

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 activity 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: I can be my best self

Children are introduced to the characters of Mo and Ko as two little aliens from the planet Zo who know a lot about children and want to help children to feel good about themselves. They are introduced to the idea of their best selves and given positive characteristics to describe themselves. These are based on the Character Strengths of Positive Psychology including kind, funny, brave, friendly, loving, energetic and thankful.

Support your child: Read the poem *Hello Mo, hello Ko* with your child this week and talk about your child's positive characteristics. Praise them for showing these positive characteristics and let them know how proud you are of them. Mo and Ko's challenge to the children is for them to be their best selves every day by showing these characteristics, so try to support them with this as much as possible by noticing, reinforcing and praising.

Lesson 2: I can name my feelings

Your child learns that all feelings are OK and names as many as they can including - happy, sad, angry, calm, frustrated and jealous. They learn it's not OK to hurt others because of our feelings.

Support your child: Read the poem *All Feelings are OK* 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 your child to use their words to name how they are feeling and to remember that all feelings are OK.



WELCOME TO WELL-BEING - BOOK B: GOOD TO BE ME WITH MO AND KO!

Parent/Guardian/Carer Information Leaflet

Lesson 3: I can name more feelings

Your child continues to learn that all feelings are OK and names more including – worried, excited, afraid, confident, disappointed and frustrated. 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 9) with your child. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to keep naming their feelings and sharing how they feel, as this can help them to feel better. You can ask them how they are feeling and help them to name their feelings and to remind them that all feelings are OK.

Lesson 4: I can tame my feelings

In this lesson, children learn what it means to 'tame' our feelings – so that strong feelings like anger and worry don't feel as 'wild' and overwhelming. They learn different strategies to deal with and express their strong feelings including talking to someone, doing a physical activity, crying and **Slide Breathing**, which is where they take a deep breath in for the count of 4 and let it out for the count of 4.

Support your child: Read the poem *If my feelings* (on page 12) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to tame their feelings if they need to. Support them by reminding them of the different techniques and letting them choose ways to express themselves. Modelling the strategies yourself when you are dealing with your own strong feelings would also be very helpful for your child to observe.

Lesson 5: Sprinkle kindness

In this lesson, children discuss the different ways that they can sprinkle kindness every day by helping others, using kind words, sharing and caring. They discuss how it makes them feel when they are kind to others and how this can help them to be their 'best self'.

Support your child: Read the poem *I sprinkle kindness* (on page 15) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge is for your child to do at least one kind thing every day. Support them by noticing and praising their kind acts, encouraging them and perhaps joining in as a family.

Lesson 6: I'm ready to relax

In this lesson, children discuss how it feels to be relaxed and calm and the different things they can do to help themselves to feel relaxed. They are introduced to the **Chill and Spill** technique which helps them to relax and release tension by tensing up all their muscles (chill) and then relaxing them (spill). They are also learning the **3-2-1... Listen** mindfulness-based technique for feeling calm, based on the senses. This involves naming 3 things they can see, 2 things they can hear and 1 thing they can touch. After children do the activity they can be encouraged to close their eyes, put their hands on their knees and listen to their breathing for a few rounds.

Support your child: Read the poem *Chill and Spill* (on page 18) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is to use their **Chill and Spill** technique whenever they would like to feel relaxed. Try it with them when they feel tense or stressed and perhaps before bedtime to help them to relax before sleeping.





WELCOME TO WELL-BEING - BOOK B: GOOD TO BE ME WITH MO AND KO!

Parent/Guardian/Carer Information Leaflet

Lesson 7: It's OK to feel worried

Children discuss what makes them feel worried and learn that everyone feels worried sometimes. They discuss what they can do when they feel worried including talking to someone, using their **Slide breathing**, **Chill and Spill** and **3-2-1... Listen** techniques.

Support your child: Read the poem **Worries wriggle** (on page 21) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to choose something that they can do when they feel worried - to help them to deal with their worries. If your child is worried, it is important to empathise and validate their feeling, to listen to them and to let them know that it is OK to feel worried. Talking worries out with your child can really help them. If the worry is something they can't solve, remind them that they can take a break from it by doing something fun for a while. This type of healthy distraction is important to prevent rumination.

Lesson 8: Today I'm thankful

In this lesson, children discuss all the things that they are thankful for. They think about how it makes them feel when they are thankful. They are reminded that being thankful helps them to be their best self.

Support your child: Read the poem **Today I'm thankful** (on page 24) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to think of **3 good things** that they are thankful for every day. Support them with this by discussing it each evening and perhaps doing it yourself or as a family.

Lesson 9: My friends have feelings too

Children discuss the idea that their friends have feelings too and that thinking of how others feel is an important way to show kindness and to be a good friend. They learn a 3-step approach to figure out how their friends are feeling – **Look, ask, listen**. If they realise that their friends are upset, they are encouraged to think of ways to help them to feel better.

Support your child: Read the poem **My friends have feelings too** (on page 27) with your child this week. Mo and Ko's challenge this week is for your child to use the **Look, ask, listen** approach to figure out how other people feel. 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 be their best self by doing at least one of the challenges every day from now on.