

# Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education

## Fact Sheet for Parents

**Well-being** is fundamental to overall student success. Students can't learn if they don't feel safe and welcome at school, if their mental health is at risk and if they don't have the tools or the motivation to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle, both inside and outside of school. Children and students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self are most likely to reach their full potential.

There are four key components to the ministry's well-being strategy:

- **Positive Mental Health** involves helping school boards develop and implement mental health and addiction strategies and working with staff to support positive mental health for all students, including supporting those with mental health needs or addictions.
- **Safe and Accepting Schools** set out expectations for all school boards to provide safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments that support the achievement and well-being of every student. These expectations include addressing and preventing bullying and creating a positive school climate.
- **Healthy Schools** are key to establishing the learning conditions necessary to help students reach their full potential. With these conditions in place, students are more likely to adopt healthy, active habits and continue with them throughout their lives.
- **Equity and Inclusive Education** involves identifying and removing discriminatory biases and barriers in the system to support student achievement and well-being - by demonstrating respect for our diverse identities and strengths.



# What is Well-Being?

Well-being is a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. Well-being in early years and school settings is about helping children and students become more resilient, so that they can make positive, healthy choices to support learning and achievement, now and in the future.

## What Makes up Well-Being?

The ministry is focusing on four domains of well-being, which include:

- **Cognitive** — the development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the ability to be flexible and innovative.
- **Emotional** — the ability to learn about and experience emotions, and understand how to recognize, manage, and cope with them. It includes developing a sense of empathy, confidence, purpose and resilience.
- **Social** — the development of self-awareness, including the sense of belonging, collaboration, relationships with others, and communication skills.
- **Physical** — the growth and development of the body, affected by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating and healthy life choices.



Promoting well-being is about fostering learning environments that encompass all four of these domains of well-being. Educators and staff who are motivated and enthusiastic about their work are an essential part of promoting well-being and achievement.

## Next Steps

We plan to work together with our education partners, such as school boards, to determine what well-being looks like, what is needed to support it and how best to measure it. We also want to learn from the good work that has already been done to promote well-being in Ontario's education system. By determining how best to measure well-being, we can also understand more clearly what is needed to create positive learning environments and focus on how this supports everything we do. It also allows us to figure out how to improve student well-being across the province.

In addition to our work with students in elementary and secondary schools, in the future we will also be expanding our focus to include children in the early years system, as well as educators and all staff.

Our goal is that all children, students and staff will feel supported in the areas of cognitive, emotional, social and physical well-being. We know that children and students will be more successful when they have a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.

Ontario is committed to helping students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being, so they can become confident, capable and caring citizens.

Promoting well-being is one of the ministry's four goals outlined in *Achieving Excellence, Ontario's Renewed Vision for Education*. Learn more at [ontario.ca/eduvison](http://ontario.ca/eduvison)