

CHILDREN'S WELLBEING CARDS

Teacher Resource Notes

14th July 2020

Using positive affirmations with children is central to their wellbeing, thus the *Children's Wellbeing Cards* have been designed with the intention of lovingly supporting children to affirm their foundational needs.

The set consists of 28 cards and a guidebook with associated reading to match each card. The guidebook contains instructions on ways to use the cards with children to encourage the expression of their feelings, thoughts and emotions in a healthy way.

Use in the curriculum: focus on wellbeing in schools

The focus on wellbeing in schools was ignited by a mental health focus and recognition of the stressors children face. Use of the *Children's Wellbeing Cards* in the classroom will give children intentional messages that their needs matter, that their emotional life and feelings are just as important as other educational requirements such as reading, writing and arithmetic. The Children's Wellbeing Cards will support children to become adept at identifying their needs and be curious about the meaning of feelings and identifying their emotions.

Teaching children to understand their own needs as they arise and a practical way of affirming their needs for themselves allows them to bring a self-directed balance to their life in a simple yet powerful way. This level of self-awareness will help children to remain centred, balanced and connected to their wellbeing regardless of the many influences they encounter in the classroom or throughout the school day.

Mindset, mindfulness and positive education are central to the mental health of all children. The wellbeing cards offer children a means of self-discovery as they learn that wellbeing is more than just the mind or being more positive. The cards take this one step further by inviting a body association of need, which will support children to integrate their feelings and thoughts and manage their behaviours.

Themes

The *Children's Wellbeing Cards* are based on a whole-child philosophy called the Foundational Needs Model (FNM), which views children as being integrated and whole and equipped to know what they

need. Based upon Western psychology, philosophy and science and also Eastern philosophy of the chakras, Childosophy™ is a whole-child philosophy that was created by Dr Maxine Therese. The FNM gives adult and children alike an interpretive approach to understanding children's behaviours for the underlying unmet needs they are communicating and a simple way of aligning these needs with the colours of the rainbow:

1. Red cards the need to be safe and secure, encompassing the variety of needs around safety and security.
2. Orange cards: the need to feel, encompassing the needs around joy, pleasure, the emotions and bodily sensations.
3. Yellow cards: the need to act, encompassing the needs around expressing individual will, self-esteem and personal power.
4. Green cards: the need to love, encompassing the needs for relating, unconditional love and connection.
5. Blue cards: the need to speak, encompassing the needs of expression and voice.
6. Indigo cards: the need to see, encompassing the needs around vision, imagination and symbolic sight.
7. Purple cards: the need to know, encompassing the needs of unity, highest power and universal knowledge.

The 28 cards in the deck offer wisdom that supports each colour of the seven foundational needs according to the four seasons of nature. Each card has an accompanying reading that expresses the ancient wisdom and science underlying each need in a simple way without having to explain or intellectualise it. By using the cards children learn indirectly how the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of their lives all converge in the particular energy centres of the physical body, which speak to particular needs of being human. Also, they learn how our needs are changeable, just like the seasons.

Discussion and wonder questions

Hold the cards and open the card deck to show the rainbow of four colours, one for each need. Explain to the children that there are seven needs for wellbeing, each of which is going to be explored. Each need has a corresponding colour and a special spot in the body (show the children the map of the needs on the body from the guidebook or on a larger chart). Each need also connects to feelings, emotions and thought patterns (mindset), and how these affect behaviour. Let the children know their behaviours and challenges give clues about what may be going on for them — their feelings and thoughts about themselves and the world — and that you are going to discover together what their own behaviours mean.

1. What is wellbeing?
[Answer: a feeling of connectedness and wholeness, a little like everything is in the right place. Feeling/thinking/acting in harmony.]

2. What are feelings?

[Answer: the things that are felt through the body, sometimes called sensory experience: touch, seeing, smelling, hearing and taste.]

3. What are thoughts?

[Answer: how those feelings are interpreted or decoded; the evaluation and associative thinking about the feelings.]

4. What are our actions?

[Answer: behaviours and active expressions such as emotions that are the result of what is felt and thought.]

Express to the children that sometimes the way they feel and the way they think are not cohesive and that they then behave in certain ways to alert this. Also, if they see a behaviour they do not like in themselves or others they can try to determine the unmet need that is behind the behaviour.

Visit www.childsophy.com for more information for teachers about the science behind the Foundational Needs Model.

Group-sharing activity

You can use the cards as a term-based project or a daily practice.

Term-based eight-weeks Foundational Needs Model and the body map:

- Read the affirmation and the meaning of the card to the class.
- Ask the children to notice as you read what part of the meaning seems the most important to them.
- This card will have a special theme that your class can focus on for the day.
- See the themes section here.
- Remind your child of the location in their physical body that the card's message corresponds to and ask them to take notice of this area of their body during the day.
- You may wish to get the children to write the affirmation down or you can leave the card in a special place so your class can see it at any time during the day.

A word from the author

The research-based *Children's Wellbeing Cards* are an idea that began in 2007. I wanted a fun and easy way for children to understand and identify their foundational needs through imagery and simple

affirmations. I asked Melanie Elderfield (Bedford) to create images for each of the themes I had identified in my years of research studying psychology and philosophy exploring children's needs and wellbeing. Melanie's illustrations capture Childosophy™ perfectly. Children and adults wanting to connect with their inner child will love the illustrations on the cards for the magic they contain and the support they provide both children and adults in learning about their foundational needs.

I know that when teachers use the cards in the classroom it leads to transformative outcomes. Working together to explore foundational needs as a school-based philosophy and choosing one or both designed approaches to use in the classroom allow the space for emotional processing and validation of feelings and thoughts, which benefits the whole school community.

Testimonial

As a classroom teacher of foundation children and a children's wellbeing practitioner of Childosophy™, I regularly use the Children's Wellbeing Cards during morning circle times. The children love to choose a card from the deck that is just for them for that day. I read the meaning of the card. If time is limited, I will select just one card from the deck, holding an intention for the class as a whole. As we are all connected, the card selected applies to each of us and we take our own meaning to balance our needs for the day. This is a lovely and gentle way to build connection and union between myself and my students and between the students themselves. More recently, during remote learning, I used the cards with my morning announcement as a way of assisting children to connect with each other and myself and to balance their emotional selves during restrictions.

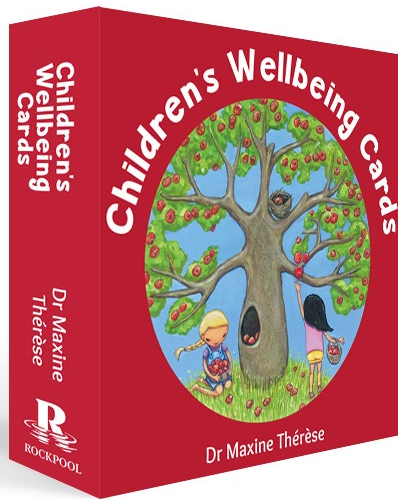
I use the Childosophy™ chart with children who may be in distress or imbalance in some way, to assist us both to ascertain the unmet foundational need and the way the child needs to rebalance. It is a quick check in that gets right to the heart of the issue without delving too deeply or taking too much time away from the class. In this way, the children in my class are able to stay aligned in their feelings, thoughts and actions throughout the day.

In my class I like to celebrate a different child each week, so students feel loved and appreciated, heard, seen and connected. I use the chart to inform the unmet need of one specific child, who becomes our special person of the week. With that need in mind, the special person has an opportunity to share something they would like others to know about them (encouraging connection). Then the class shares what they have in common with that person and the lesson culminates in each child contributing a picture and some words for that special person that I make into a class book. Each student ends up with their own book by the end of the year, and this makes each child feel connected as well as valued and loved in the space.

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Children's Wellbeing Cards

by Maxine Thérèse

28 cards and guidebook in a 2-piece box

Cards: 120 x 120 mm round on thick card

Box: 132 x 132 x 32 mm

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