



# Wellbeing Wednesday



Welcome to our new weekly blog, **Wellbeing Wednesday**! **Wellbeing** relates to both our physical and mental health, and is often defined as our overall sense of happiness and life satisfaction. The focus of this weeks' blog is '**wellbeing and education**'. In England, the **national education strategy** is set by the **Department for Education**. The strategy for 2015-2020 was updated last week on the 24th August, 2016, so what does it say about **wellbeing**? I am sure this is a question that many parents will be interested in. The strategy lists three core objectives and the first of these is:

**'Safety and wellbeing:** all children and young people are protected from harm and vulnerable children are supported to succeed with opportunities as good as those for any other child.'

The Department goes on to discuss the necessities of **social work reform**, building a **culture of excellence** in children's services and **promoting opportunities** for vulnerable children. The Department highlights that **70 per cent of children's homes are rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding** (31 March 2015), yet there is a 24 per cent re-referral rate into children's social care within 12 months, and a delay of 547 days between a child's entry into care, and placement with adoptive parents<sup>i</sup>. During a previous role as a Tutor, I taught many foster carers on the subject of child development. **Poor emotional wellbeing and attachment issues, often due to early years' neglect**, domestic abuse and/or multiple placements, were sadly too commonplace.

On a positive note, we are fortunate in the United Kingdom, to live in a country where a child's **wellbeing** is safeguarded in legislation. In the UK, **maintained schools have statutory duties to promote children and young people's wellbeing**<sup>ii</sup> and statutory responsibilities to provide a curriculum that is broadly based, balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. Under section 78 of the **Education Act 2002** and the **Academies Act 2010** such a curriculum must:

**"promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life."**<sup>iii</sup>

The extent of course to which school's foster a child's **wellbeing** varies. **As a parent, there are many ways in which you can influence education policy and school wellbeing**. Official positions exist such as Governor roles, but it is possible to have an active role in a less formal capacity. One important question to ask is **what policies a school has in place**, and whether these are being adhered to. **There are a list of statutory policies which schools in the UK must have in place**, including School behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Child protection policy and procedures<sup>iv</sup>. If you need support with parent advocacy and inclusion, there are networks and advice lines you can contact including Parent Carer Forums- <http://www.nnpf.org.uk/> and IPSEA- Independent Parental Special Educational Advice- <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>.

What we need to see more of in the UK, is a culture where children and parents are genuinely listened to, and where advice is incorporated into the practice of both schools and commissioning bodies. The UK does have an excellent system for conducting consultations both at the Government and Local Authority level, but the extent to which recommendations are adopted, is not always transparent. A great deal of published evidence exists on creating a whole school approach to wellbeing, and how wellbeing contributes to academic attainment and long term life outcomes. These are topics which I will cover in later blogs, so please keep in touch! For now, I will share with you one of my favourite quotes:

**“Without listening to children and understanding children’s own views about their quality of life- how can we ever expect to improve the lives of children and young people?”<sup>v</sup>**

On that note, I am going to close with some photos of a recent arts and crafts day with my son. In his words, he said that the painting below represents:

**“a nice calm beautiful walk in the countryside, which is good for my wellbeing.”**



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I have held senior positions in Public Health over a decade in Local Government and the NHS, including an exchange with the Department for Education. Experience incorporates the commissioning of Health Visiting and School Nursing specifications for the 0-24 age range, including Special Educational Needs. I am successful at influencing policy, have coordinated official responses to Parliament’s review into Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), and have won national awards for health campaigns including DryJanuary. I am a qualified Tutor and have taught courses including child development. I have a particular interest in the health and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable groups, and was the Trustee of RAID-TV, an international health charity from 2010-2014. I held global positions as a Youth Committee Co-ordinator with United Nations Associations from 2004-2009. I strongly believe in ‘service user’ participation and am a member of a local Parent Carer Forum. Contact me on [Nathalie@lalinguistica.com](mailto:Nathalie@lalinguistica.com) [www.lalinguistica.com](http://www.lalinguistica.com) [www.thewellbeingalphabet.com](http://www.thewellbeingalphabet.com)

## References

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020/single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020>

<sup>ii</sup> Children Act 2004. [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715 www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFES-0036-2007.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFES-0036-2007.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Education Act 2002. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/78 5](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/78%205); Academies Act 2010. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/32/section/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/32/section/1)

<sup>iv</sup> Statutory Policies for Schools: Advice on the policies and documents that governing bodies and proprietors of schools are required to have by law, Department for Education, September 2014

<sup>v</sup> The Good Childhood Report 2015, The Children’s Society, August 2015.