



Teacher's Guide: Junior & Senior Infants

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Programme Overview

Folens My Wellbeing Diary is an evidence-based programme with a strong emphasis on daily mindful practice. Wellbeing is defined as feeling good about yourself, the world around you and functioning well in everyday life. It includes having good mental health, the ability to show resilience and coping skills and the ability to 'bounce back' when faced with the typical stresses and challenges of life. Wellbeing encompasses:

- Proper sleep, diet and exercise
- Relationships, social connections and altruism
- Meaningful and purposeful activity and a sense of mastery
- The ability to regulate emotions and behaviour
- Healthy and helpful thinking skills
- Kindness to self and others
- Adopting a growth rather than fixed mindset
- The ability to adapt and bounce back

My Wellbeing Diary fosters all of the above concepts through a combination of mindful meditation videos, daily diary entries and learning modules. As with healthy eating and exercise, it is important that wellbeing is continuously worked on and engaged with in order for the individual to experience lasting benefit.

Wellbeing in Schools

The PDST states that 'Schools and centres for education in Ireland play a vital role in the promotion of wellbeing through a range of activities and approaches to support the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people.' The Department of Education launched the revised Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice in October, 2019. Every school and centre for education is required by 2023 to use the School Self-Evaluation process to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle.

<https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf>)

The HSE suggests that in order to promote whole-school wellbeing, schools should be:

1. Developing and maintaining a safe, caring culture within the school to foster a sense of belonging
2. Building positive relationships between teachers and children.
3. Adopting a whole-school approach to health promotion
4. Actively involving children, their parents/guardians and the wider community in developing and implementing school policies to support mental health and health promotion.
5. Supporting and implementing a well-planned, consistent and integrated SPHE curriculum to enable children to enhance their coping and problem-solving skills.
6. Developing whole-school systems and structures to support the early identification of children experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties.

7. Actively involving, supporting and encouraging children’s participation in extra-curricular activities.
8. Fostering a whole-school ethos that accepts and values diversity within the pupil and staff population.
9. Providing easy access to information for pupils and staff on supports available to them within the school and wider community.
10. Facilitating access to continuing professional development for school staff on the promotion of the mental health and well-being of children.

<https://assets.gov.ie/41246/9a328ba4ecde44489eb9e686876041e3.pdf>

In addition to the above, wellbeing is now listed as one of the seven competencies within the new draft primary curriculum frame published by the NCCA in 2020.

“This competency develops children’s appreciation and demonstration of wellbeing and their ability to be as physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually healthy as they can be. It fosters self-awareness and promotes the importance of children seeing themselves as capable and resourceful. This supports their ability to deal with the normal challenges of life, become resilient and cope in a variety of situations and circumstances. It contributes to children’s demonstration of how they can be physically healthy through physical activity, eating healthy food and self-care. It helps children become positive and engaged in their learning and realise their own uniqueness and potential. It supports healthy relationships with themselves, their peers, their family and the wider world.”



<https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf>

Programme Components

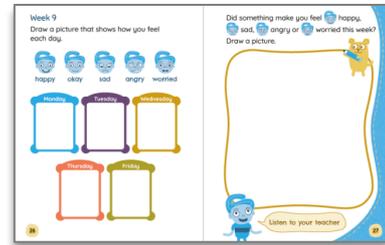
The infant programme for *My Wellbeing Diary* consists of the following components:

Pupil book

The pupil book consists of both daily diary pages and learning module pages:

Diary pages

The diary pages require children to identify how they feel on a particular day by colouring or drawing the emoji that best reflects this. On Fridays, children are prompted to draw a picture, showing something that made them feel happy, sad, angry or worried that week.



Diary pages

Learning Module pages

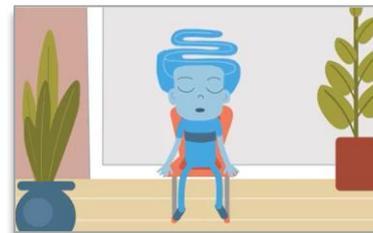
There are 10 learning modules (one for each month) covering different aspects of wellbeing. The learning module pages in the pupil book are to provide children with practice and consolidation of the concepts covered.



Learning module pages

Meditation Videos

There are two daily meditation videos for infants – *Belly Breathing Practice* and *Body Scan Meditation*. The purpose of each video is to encourage mindfulness, make children more aware of their own thoughts and feelings and create a sense of calm before for a day of lessons. (Note: there is also a *Belly Breathing Instruction* video for use at the start of the year to demonstrate how belly breathing works)



Meditation video

PowerPoints Presentations

There are 10 PowerPoint presentations which accompany the 10 learning modules. They can be used by the teacher to introduce topics and concepts in a visual way.



PowerPoint

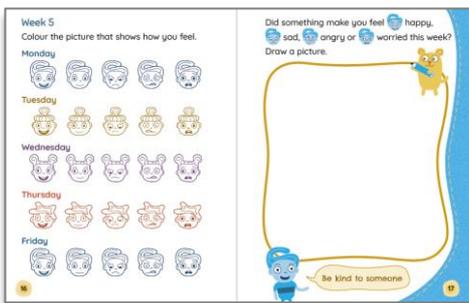
Teacher's Guide

The teacher's guide contains curriculum information as well as detailed lesson plans for each of the learning modules module with circle time and classroom activity suggestions.

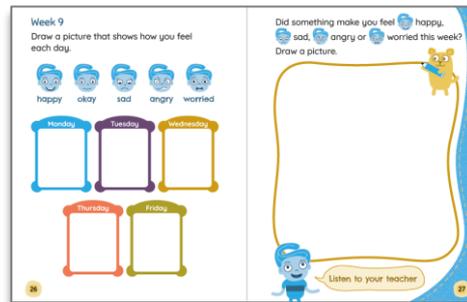
Using the Programme

Diary pages

The diary pages of *My Wellbeing Diary* are designed to be used daily in conjunction with the meditation videos. Teachers have the freedom to decide how to use the resources in a way that best suits their class (e.g. meditation directly followed by diary entry every morning *or* meditation in the morning and diary entry in the afternoon). More time can be spent on the second diary page (where children draw a picture of something that elicited a strong emotion that week) on Friday. The purpose of the second diary pages is for children to engage with both *how* they feel and *why* every week, thus developing emotional literacy and self-awareness. Children need to learn to recognise and name their emotions in order to be able to regulate them.



Diary pages: Type 1



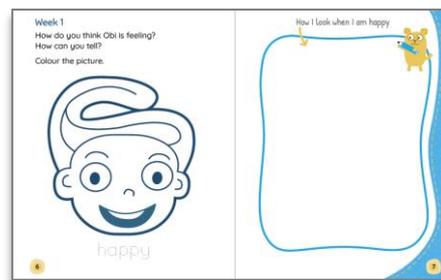
Diary pages: Type 2

Feelings PowerPoint and diary pages

Before asking students to complete the diary pages, teachers should spend the first four weeks of the year helping children recognise and label different emotions. They can use the Feelings PowerPoint and diary pages 6 – 13 to do this.



Feelings PowerPoint slide



Feelings diary pages

Meditation videos

These simple videos are approximately 3 - 5 minutes long and are designed to be used everyday in class. The purpose of each video is to encourage mindfulness, make children more aware of their own thoughts and feelings and create a sense of calm before a day of lessons. These meditations can be carried out in the classroom or during circle time, seated or lying on the floor, and require no additional equipment.

Belly Breathing Instruction: The purpose of this video is simply to demonstrate how belly breathing works.

Belly Breathing Practice: Once children have grasped the basics of belly breathing, they can then use the *Belly Breathing Practice video*. Learning to belly breath is an important skill for children as it calms the body and mind thus encouraging emotional self-regulation.

Body Scan Meditation: This body scan is an effective way to engage in mindful meditation practice. It encourages children to step out of their mind and pay attention to how their body is feeling in the present. The goal is to train the mind to become more aware of sensory experience, build focus and encourage children to be fully present in their lives.

Teachers can alternate between the *Belly Breathing Practice* and *Body Scan Meditation* videos.

Learning Modules

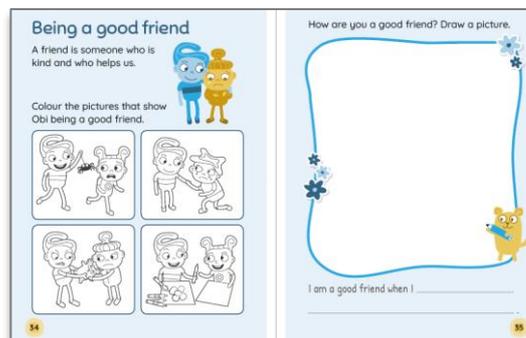
The 10 Learning Modules are designed to be used across the 10 months of the school year and cover the following concepts:

Month	Module	Concept
September	All About Me!	Develop identity and a sense of self
October	Things I Am Good At	Develop confidence by identifying areas of competence
November	What Makes Me Happy?	Develop awareness of activities that generate positive emotions
December	Being A Good Friend	Develop social skills and a sense of empathy
January	I Can Do It!	Develop skills to cope with fearful or challenging situations
February	Understanding My Body	Develop an understanding of the interrelationship between mind and body
March	Trying My Best	Develop resilience and a 'growth mindset'
April	Eating Well	Understand the importance of healthy eating
May	Moving	Understand the importance of exercise and physical movement
June	Noticing My Thoughts	Become aware of negative thoughts and how they can be 'reframed'

For each module, there is an accompanying PowerPoint which teachers can use to prompt talk and discussion around the concepts. At the end of the lesson, children complete the relevant learning module pages in the diary.



Learning module PowerPoint slide



Learning module pages

Yearly Scheme

Month	Diary Pages / Learning Modules	Strand	Strand Unit
September	Learning Module 1: All About Me	Myself Myself and others	Self-Identity Myself and my family
	Diary Pages: 6 - 13	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
October	Learning Module 2: Things I Am Good At	Myself	Self-Identity
	Diary Pages: 16 - 23	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
November	Learning Module 3: What Makes Me Happy	Myself	Self-Identity
	Diary Pages: 26 - 33	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
December	Learning Module 4: Being A Good Friend	Myself and others	My friends and other people Relating to others
	Diary Pages: 36 - 43	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
January	Learning Module 5: I Can Do It!	Myself	Self-Identity
	Diary Pages: 46 - 53	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
February	Learning Module 6: Understanding My Body	Myself	Growing and changing
	Diary Pages: 56 - 63	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
March	Learning Module 7: Trying My Best	Myself	Self-Identity
	Diary Pages: 66 - 73	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
April	Learning Module 8: Eating Well	Myself	Taking care of my body
	Diary Pages: 76 - 83	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
May	Learning Module 9: Moving	Myself	Taking care of my body
	Diary Pages: 86 - 93	Myself	Growing and changing Self-identity
June	Learning Module 10: Noticing My Thoughts	Myself	Growing and changing

Lesson Plans

Learning Module 1: All About Me!

Overview

September		
Strand: Myself	Strand Unit: Self-Identity	Objectives: Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss and appreciate all the features that make a person special and unique • begin to understand, appreciate and respect personal abilities, skills and talents • recognise and record personal preferences
Strand: Myself and others	Strand Unit: Myself and my family	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and name the people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Wellbeing Diary (pp. 4–5) • Learning Module 1 PowerPoint: All About Me! 	
Learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Slides 2–3: Children identify ways we can be similar and different from one another, discuss what it means to be unique/special and identify some of their personal preferences • Circle time: Children introduce/talk about themselves • PowerPoint Slides 4-5: Children talk about their families and that there are lots of different types of families • Classroom activity: Children seek out others in the class who share their preferences • My Wellbeing Diary (p. 4): Children draw a picture of themselves, write their name, age, and what they would like to be when they grow up • My Wellbeing Diary (p. 5): Children draw pictures of their favourite foods and animals and label them (if possible) 	
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation • Diary pages (pp. 4–5) 	
Integration	Literacy – oral language development; writing Visual arts – drawing	

Background Information

It is important that all children develop a sense of their own self and their identity. A positive sense of identity is crucial to the development of self-esteem and confidence. Children who feel worthy and capable are more likely to be optimistic and to do well in school. A healthy sense of identity also helps children to be more open to people from other backgrounds because they are less likely to fear differences or put other children down to feel better about themselves. A strong and positive feeling

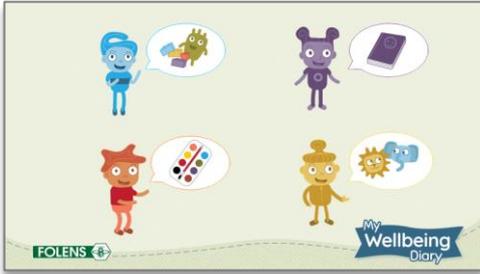
about their parents and grandparents helps children feel safe and confident about themselves and their roots.

It is also vital to foster acceptance of differences in others at this age. Younger children tend to accept difference in others without question. They make friends with children from a range of different backgrounds or abilities or from a range of different families. As children get older, they learn to value difference from their parents and other influential adults in their lives. Encouraging children to learn about and understand their own background before introducing them to the cultures and traditions of others can help them to be more considerate of the feelings and opinions of others. Accepting difference means understanding how we are alike, how we are different and treating everyone with respect and understanding regardless of the differences.

Detailed Notes

PowerPoint content	Teacher discussion prompts
<p>Slide 1</p> 	<p>Launch the PowerPoint for Learning Module 1: All About Me!</p>
<p>Slide 2</p> 	<p>Click to reveal the characters. Introduce them to the class.</p> <p>Ask children, how are they similar/the same? prompt children to give as many answers as they can <i>E.g. they all have two eyes, two ears, arms, legs, they are all children, they all have names, they are all smiling, etc.</i></p> <p>Now ask, how are they different? <i>E.g. they have different names, are different heights, they have different hair, they are different colours, they wear different clothes, etc.</i></p> <p>Explain to children that although we are the same in many ways, we all have differences that make us unique/special. <i>E.g. Some of us are tall, some of us are short, some of us have blue eyes and some of us have brown eyes. Our names, the way we look and the way we dress are some of the things that make us unique/special.</i></p>
<p>Circle Time Activity</p> <p>Using a speaking object, go round the circle and have each child introduce/talk about him/herself. This could include their name, who is in their family, how many pets they have, their favourite food and colour, what they would like to be when they grow up, etc. Encourage children to smile, make eye contact with one another and use a loud, brave voice. Prompt children if they get ‘stuck’ and praise each child for sharing.</p>	

Slide 3



Explain to children that the things we like also make us unique. We all have different favourite foods, books, films, and activities.

Click to make the characters and their favourites appear. Discuss them briefly.

Ask some children what their favourite foods/books/tv shows are to demonstrate the variety of favourites in the class.

Explain to children that **life would be very boring if everybody liked the same things.** Discuss how important it is to respect other people's preferences.

Slide 4



Tell children that **our families also make us unique.**

Click to reveal the images of Pip and Pip's family, and Appa and Appa's family.

Point out that **these families look very different, but both Pip and Appa have relatives who love and take care of them. Other people may have families that look very different to ours, and that is okay. Everybody has a family that is special and unique.**

Classroom activity

Provide each child with a large piece of paper on which they can draw a picture of themselves and their family. Ask the child to introduce each family member to the class. Discuss the similarities between the children and their families (e.g. we all like hugs, we all have birthdays, we all like playing together/watching movies, etc.) then move on to focus on differences. You could have children stand, clap their hands etc. if they have brown hair, speak a different language, have a pet, eat toast for breakfast, etc.

Slide 5



Ask children to name some of the things that make them unique and special. You could expand this into a whole classroom talking task if time allows.

My Wellbeing Diary A

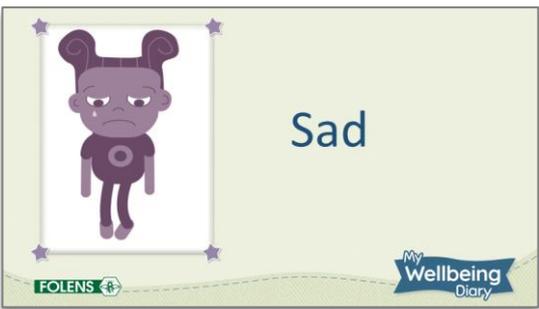
Ask children to turn to pages 4 and 5 of My Wellbeing Diary A. Read the text aloud. Ask children to draw a picture of themselves on page 4, and to write their name, age, and what they would like to be when they grow up below (if possible). Ask children to draw pictures of their favourite food and favourite animal on page 5, and to label them (if possible).

A Note About Feelings

Before they start their diary entries in October, children will spend the month of September discussing and becoming familiar with the different types of feelings they will need to learn to identify.

Very young children can find it challenging to recognise and label their emotions. It can be of great benefit to children to develop a habit of paying attention to how they are feeling and the effect their feelings has on their minds and bodies. It is the first step towards emotional self-regulation.

The four main feelings covered in My Wellbeing Diary are: *Happy, Sad, Angry* and *Worried*. Teachers can either cover one feeling each week or they can cover all of them together and revisit throughout the month. The goal is for children to understand what each feeling means, what it looks like (or how it manifests in their bodies), what makes them feel that way and how they can cope with that feeling. (Note: Feeling 'okay' is also an option for students in the daily diary pages and teachers can explain to children that they can chose this emoji if they aren't feeling a particularly strong emotion like happiness, sadness, anger or worry.)

Powerpoint	Teacher discussion prompts
<p>Feelings PowerPoint: Slide 2 (Happy)</p> 	<p>Tell children to look at Obi. Ask them how they think Obi is feeling. Ask them how they know that Obi is happy. How does this show in Obi's face and body? Then ask children how they feel when they are happy. What makes them happy?</p> <p>Remind them that nobody feels happy all the time and that's okay.</p> <p>Children then complete diary pages 6 and 7.</p>
<p>Feelings PowerPoint: Slide 3 (Sad)</p> 	<p>Tell children to look at Pip. Ask them how they think Pip is feeling. Ask them how they know that Pip is sad. How does this show in Pip's face and body? Then ask children how they feel when they are sad. What does their face look like? What does their body look like? What things make them sad? Can they think of a time they were sad? What made them sad?</p> <p>Tell children that everyone feels sad sometimes. Make sure children understand that it is okay to feel sad. However, there are things we can do to help us feel better when we are sad. <i>E.g. we can think about the people who love us, we can do something that we enjoy, we can tell an adult we trust how we are feeling.</i></p> <p>Ask children to think of something that might make them feel better when they are sad.</p> <p>Children then complete diary pages 8 and 9.</p>

Feelings PowerPoint: Slide 4 (Angry)



Tell children to look at Appa. Ask them how they think Appa is feeling. Ask them how they know that Appa is angry. How does this show in Appa's face and body? Then ask children how they feel when they are angry. What does their face look like? What does their body look like? What things make them angry? Can they think of a time they were angry? What made them angry?

Children can have difficulty telling the difference between a little bit cross and being truly angry. Help them to see the difference between the degrees of emotion.

Tell children that everyone feels angry sometimes. Make sure children understand that it is okay to feel angry. However, there are things we can do to help us calm down when we are angry. *E.g. we can take deep breaths, we can take a timeout, we can do something that we find enjoyable.* Ask children to think of something that might make them calm down when they are angry.

Children then complete diary pages 10 and 11.

Feelings PowerPoint: Slide 5 (Worried)



Tell children to look at Lan. Ask them how they think Lan is feeling. Ask them how they know that Lan is worried. How does this show in Lan's face and body? Then ask children how they feel when they are worried. What does their face look like? What does their body look like? What things make them worried? Can they think of a time they were worried? What made them worried?

Tell children that everyone feels worried sometimes. Make sure children understand that it is okay to feel worried. However, there are things we can do to help us calm down when we are worried. *(E.g. we can talk to an adult we trust, we can take deep breaths, we can imagine being in a special place that makes us feel calm.)* Ask children to think of something that might make them feel better when they are worried.

Children then complete diary pages 12 and 13.

Learning Module 2: Things I Am Good At

Overview

October	
Strand: Myself	Strand Unit: Self-identity
Objectives	Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to understand, appreciate and respect personal abilities, skills and talents
Resources	My Wellbeing Diary (pp. 14–15) Learning Module 2 PowerPoint: Things I Am Good At
Learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerpoint Slides 2-3: Children identify the things they are good at and how doing these things makes them feel Circle time activity: Confidence circle – children in the circle identify what their neighbour is good at PowerPoint Slides 4-5: Children identify new things they would like to try, discussion around discovering hidden talents and finding out what we are good at My Wellbeing Diary (p. 14): Children trace the words My Wellbeing Diary (p. 15): Children draw a picture of something they are good at and complete the caption (if possible)
Assessment	Teacher observation Diary pages 14 and 15
Integration	Literacy – oral language development; writing Visual arts – drawing

Background Information

Most children will naturally wonder what they excel at. In order to develop a sense of self-worth, it is important that children discover an area of competence - an ability or skill that they can be good at. Children who do not have an area of competence lack in self-confidence and may subsequently develop a fear of trying new things. Children who discover their area of competence often discover the motivation to work hard and develop an understanding of how they can contribute to the world. As children discover their skills and develop in confidence, they become motivated to work hard in other areas where they are weaker. For example, a child's ability in art or PE may encourage them to try harder in other school subjects. Even if they do not excel there, they remain confident in themselves because they know they excel in other areas.

Detailed Notes

PowerPoint content	Teacher discussion prompts
<p>Slide 1</p> 	<p>Launch the PowerPoint for Learning Module 2: Things I Am Good At</p>
<p>Slide 2</p> 	<p>Explain to children that everyone has something they are good at. Often doing things that we are good at makes us feel happy.</p> <p>Click to make the images appear one by one. Ask children to name some of the things they are good at.</p> <p>How does doing this thing make them feel? Encourage children to give as many answers as possible, e.g. happy, satisfied, calm, relaxed, excited, etc.</p>
<p>Slide 3</p> 	<p>Point out that our friends might be good at things that we are not good at. That's okay! Everybody has their own talents.</p> <p>Explain that no-one is good at everything but everyone is good at something. For example, some people are good at swimming but not good at football. Some people might not be able to draw very well but they are kind and helpful to others.</p> <p>Emphasise to children that it's important to celebrate the talents of our friends and encourage them to do the things they are good at.</p>

Circle Time Activity

Set up a confidence circle in Circle Time. Passing a speaking object around, have each child say one thing that the child sitting next to them is good at. Encourage children to find different ways to say 'good at', e.g. *Natasha is talented at doing cartwheels. Ethan is excellent at drawing. Jamie is a brilliant footballer, etc.* At the end of the activity, children can give themselves a round of applause. If children are unlikely to know what their neighbour is good at, encourage them to ask one another quietly before carrying out the activity. Some children may not feel comfortable sharing their talents with the whole class, so this is a good way to build self-esteem in less confident or outspoken children.

Slide 4



Explain to children that if **you're not sure what your talents are yet, that's okay. The best way to find out what we are good at is to try doing lots of different things.**

Encourage children to name things they would like to try.

Slide 5



Set a challenge for children to try one new thing at home this week/the weekend.

This could be a new arts and crafts activity, sport, or other creative pursuit like singing or acting.

Note: remind children that they should have an adult present when they are trying something new that might be risky, e.g. skateboarding, baking, some craft activities, etc.

My Wellbeing Diary A

Ask children to turn to pages 14 and 15 of My Wellbeing Diary A. Read the text aloud. Ask children to trace the lettering on page 14. Ask children to draw a picture showing something they are good at on page 15. Children can complete the caption for their picture, if possible.