

Time to take action	They resist participating in group activities. They appear tired, withdrawn or irritable during the day.	They are generally irritable or sad. They do not appear to enjoy school and often appear to be socially isolated or in conflict with others during break times.
Things are okay for now, but keep a close check	They appear shy participating in group activities but are generally happy and engaged in learning throughout the day.	They are generally cheerful. They have some friends at school and enjoy break times. They resist learning in the classroom and are often distracted.
Things are okay	They interact with others in group activities and appear happy and engaged in learning throughout the day.	They are generally cheerful. They have friends at school and enjoy break times. They enjoy making progress with their learning.
Cause for concern	This child sits alone at play times.	This child frequently disobeys class rules with disruptive behaviour and finds it hard to sit still in the classroom.

Many of us will struggle with our wellbeing at some point in our lives.

The earlier that we can help a child who is struggling with theirs, the easier it will be for them to grow into a happy and resilient child.

Some useful free services you, a parent or an older child in your primary school class can access directly include:

The Positive Times – is a new online ‘newspaper’ offering an array of articles, strategies and information about wellbeing and positive education in Australian schools and colleges. *Positive Times* is free for all educators to access.

www.positivetimes.com.au

Mental Health Emergency Response Line
08 9224 8888

Kids Help – for kids and teens
www.kidshelp.com.au
1800 55 1800

Healthdirect Australia – offers details of helpful organisations
1800 022 222

Rural Link – after hours telephone service for rural communities
1800 552 002

Headspace – online and telephone services
www.headspace.org.au
1800 55 1800



Is this child feeling okay?



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Every child is a **unique** and **special** individual

who learns things in their own way, in their own time.

This means it can be difficult for teachers to know when a child needs some extra support with their wellbeing. Many negative feelings, thoughts and behaviours are temporary. They are a normal part of growing up and not a cause for concern. However, if a child in your class is expressing ongoing difficulty enjoying and engaging in the school community, it may be time to seek help.

If you are concerned that a child under your care may need some extra social or psychological support, think back over the past two weeks and ask yourself these three key questions.



Is this child behaving in a way that often prevents them functioning effectively in classroom or playground activities?



Is this child behaving in a way that often prevents them fitting in socially with their classmates?



Would I describe this child as generally stressed or distressed over the past two weeks (rather than happy and content)?

If you can answer **yes** to one or more of these questions, it could be very beneficial to get some extra help and support for this child.

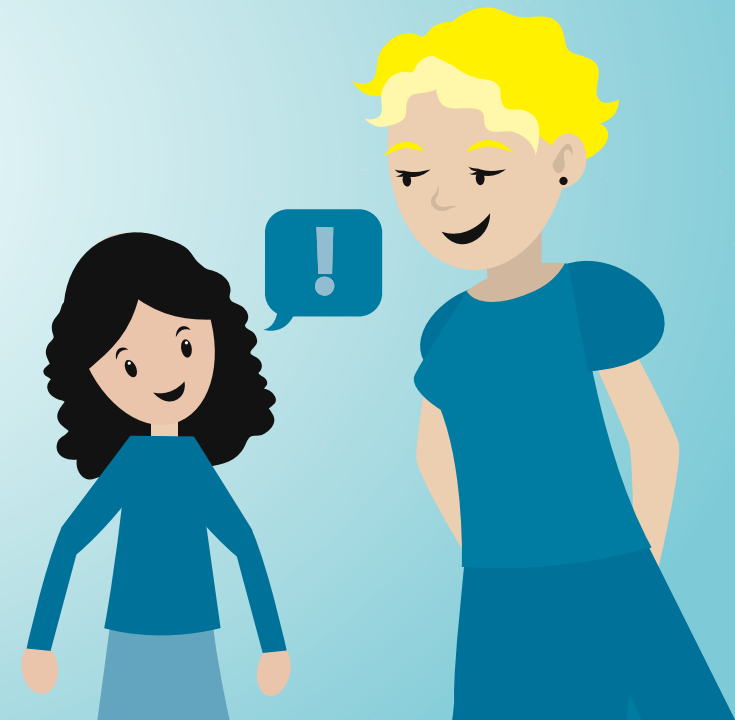
Here are some things you can do if you are concerned about a child's wellbeing.

1. Listen to the child. A teacher who listens well communicates far more effectively than one who talks well. It is very tempting for a concerned teacher to try to offer advice. It is far more beneficial for a child to have the opportunity to be the one doing the talking.

Effective listening means:

- ✓ listening without judgment of the child's behaviour
 - ✓ listening with empathy for their feelings
 - ✓ listening with genuine concern for their wellbeing.
2. Take an interest in the child—the more you express a genuine and non-judgmental interest in getting to know a child, the more they will feel safe to express themselves to you and other class members. Try asking them about their weekend, hobbies and pets. By asking about a child's interests outside of the classroom, you are demonstrating that you are interested in more than their academic progress.
 3. Examine the class social structure. You can increase overall class cohesiveness by ensuring that children sit in a range of different places over the course of a term and work corroboratively on class activities. Particularly vulnerable children can benefit from sitting centrally and from being given specific social responsibility (e.g. handing out paper or collecting finished pieces of work).

4. Speak to the child's carer or parent(s) and express your concerns (try to stay focused on the child's wellbeing without judging the parents or child's behaviour). Give the parent a copy of 'Is my child feeling okay?' so that they know where they can seek support and help.
5. Speak to your school psychologist or school chaplain and ask them to have a chat with the child. They may also be able to help you implement any programs or strategies that promote wellbeing in your school.
6. Speak to other teachers who know the child – ask them if they share your concerns.



Make sure that you are honest and open with the child and with their parents about your concerns and your actions. It is important that both children and their parents can trust and communicate with you.