

5 Enough sleep? Enough exercise?

Many of Leicestershire's young people tell us that they are especially happy when taking exercise. Running, dancing and all forms of physical activity can help achieve the positive state which psychologists call 'flow'. A positive mood lowers stress levels and enhances feelings of well-being.

Enough sleep? Young people aged between 5 and 16 years need at least 9 to 10 hours sleep each night to remain healthy in mind, emotionally strong and ready to learn.

6 Use 'Yes' more than 'No'.

Whereas 'No' can establish behaviour boundaries and signal dangers, if used too often it can cause a loss of confidence when your son or daughter face new situations. 'Yes' makes the heart sing.

7 'Talk, talk' not TV watching...

but television could be a 'conversation opener' if you choose a programme to watch together. Aim to turn off TVs and computers in children's bedrooms well before bedtime. Reading or listening to a bedtime story is most likely to promote the deep sleep needed for mental health.

8 Have a relaxing chat last thing at night.

Ask about the best moments in the day and 'talk up' things to look forward to.

Thinking of a 'happy time' before sleep will be the basis for dreams and thus sound mental health.

9 Don't let meal times become a 'battle ground'.

A simple rule such as 'I am in charge of what is served and you decide how much to eat' can help.

The Happiness Plan is about enhancing relationships, achieving in school and engendering feelings of belonging. Making up your mind to raise happy children is the starting point.

As Abraham Lincoln said;

"MOST PEOPLE ARE ABOUT AS HAPPY AS THEY MAKE THEIR MIND UP TO BE".

If you would like more information on 'Raising happy children' then please contact:

Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service within the Children and Young People's Service

Tel: 0116 284 5100/Duty Service

Email: AMatthews@leics.gov.uk

If you require this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, tape or help in understanding it in your language, please contact 0116 284 5100

Raising happy children

The ABC approach





Allow more room for happiness

Begin today

Carry on and see the difference in school and elsewhere

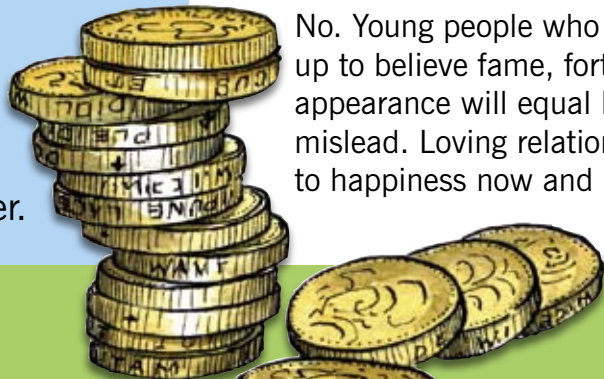
Choose a happier life for your sons or daughters. Begin with a Happiness Plan to work towards:

■ *a more optimistic outlook*

■ *a kinder road to success and learning*

■ *a healthier mind and body.*

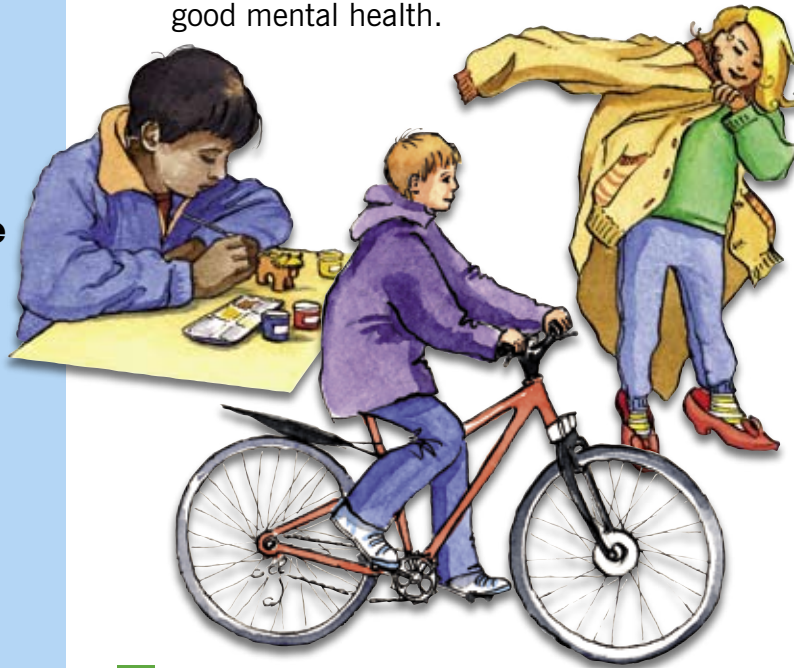
Strategies which can help young people to withstand the storms of life, both now and later.



Top Tips for a Happiness Plan:

1 Healthy eating. Healthy play.

Young people of all ages need time for play. Build 3 portions of play into each day for good mental health.



2 Money, money money?

No. Young people who grow up to believe fame, fortune and physical appearance will equal happiness are misled. Loving relationships are key to happiness now and in the future.

3 **Encourage ‘signature strengths’...** such as those things your child is already good at. Doing something enjoyable every day helps to reduce stress and boosts feelings of happiness and well-being.

4 ‘Super Mum’? ‘Super Dad?’

No – aim to be a ‘relaxed’ parent. Offer your son or daughter ‘guided choices’ rather than directions. Choice helps to establish independence and your son or daughter’s personal identity in later life. By showing trust you also build longer-term mental health.

