



# Promoting Healthy Minds for Living and Learning



Every  
child,  
every  
opportunity

**Mental health promoting schools and early childhood education and care settings recognise their role in promoting mental health, and act to create environments where children and young people can thrive, learn and grow**

Mental health is.....	Mental health is supported by.....	Schools and early childhood education and care settings....
Mental health is a state of social and emotional wellbeing in which a person can realise their abilities, engage in learning, cope with the normal stresses of life, and make a contribution to their community.	Environments that are safe, support secure attachments, and create a sense of belonging through social inclusion and participation. Skills to develop and maintain positive relationships, and resilience to social and emotional stressors	Have a key role in promoting mental health in all children and young people, and to assist those who may be at risk of developing mental illness. Recognise that children and young people's learning and development is supported by environments that promote mental health.

## Key components of mental health promoting schools and early childhood education and care settings

Safe, inclusive and empowering environments	Social and emotional learning	Family, community and service partnerships
<p>Environments that promote mental health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value children and young people for who they are</li> <li>• support and promote the physical and mental wellbeing of staff</li> <li>• create physical environments that are safe, and support a range of opportunities for learning and physical activity</li> <li>• foster safe, respectful and supportive relationships between children and young people, educators and families</li> <li>• create opportunities for children's and young people's voices to be respected and to contribute to decisions that impact on their wellbeing, learning and environment</li> <li>• have strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment, including online.</li> </ul>	<p>Social and emotional learning is integrated in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Early Years Learning and Development Framework, and should form part of a child's or young person's learning. Educators and school based health professionals have learning and teaching strategies that support children and young people to develop*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-awareness: recognise and manage emotions</li> <li>• social awareness: develop care and concern for others</li> <li>• responsible decision making: understanding and applying decision making skills</li> <li>• self-management: handle challenging situations effectively; take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing</li> <li>• relationship skills: establish positive and respectful relationships; build trusting adult relationships; form attachment to a familiar and consistent educator/s</li> </ul> <p><small>*Adapted from Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) <a href="http://www.casel.org/basics/skills.php">http://www.casel.org/basics/skills.php</a></small></p>	<p>The school or early childhood education and care setting has processes in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proactively build connections with families and communities</li> <li>• recognise the primary role of families in children's and young people's learning and development, mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>• support families to enhance their skills in developing positive relationships and their children's resilience</li> <li>• identify children and young people who may be at risk of developing mental illness, engage their families and refer to appropriate early interventions</li> <li>• partner with service providers to assist children and families to access the support they need</li> <li>• enable positive transitions within and between settings</li> </ul>

## Enablers of mental health promoting schools and early childhood education and care settings

**Integrated mental health promotion**

Mental health is recognised as an integral component of school and early childhood health promotion and educational outcomes. All actions in these settings are seen as opportunities to promote mental health and may include:

- planning health promotion actions that complement each other, and are included in overall strategic planning
- building a shared understanding across the setting of the purpose of each health promotion action, and clear processes for implementation and evaluation
- integrating health promotion actions into teaching and learning, recreation and management processes

**Building capacity to promote mental health**

School and early childhood education staff must have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote mental health. These competencies need to be supported through professional practices that encourage staff to work together, and to build partnerships with other professionals. Competencies and practices include:

<p><b>Professional competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding children's social and emotional development</li> <li>• teaching and facilitating social and emotional learning and promotion of positive behaviour</li> <li>• listening and facilitation skills</li> <li>• understanding and promoting diversity</li> <li>• development of personal social and emotional skills and awareness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Professional practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional learning</li> <li>• establishing communities of practice and networks</li> <li>• connecting with mental health professionals</li> <li>• building partnerships with community service organisations</li> <li>• establishing and maintaining referral pathways</li> <li>• connecting with relationships with other mental health initiatives</li> </ul>
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