

MENTAL HEALTH

Social well-being

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1.1. FAMILY LIFE



Welcome to School To Go and today's lesson!

This is a Wellbeing course in three episodes, with the three themes: family life, school relationships, and "being a good classmate". There will be both listening texts and exercises in the episodes.

Introduction

When we talk about wellbeing, many people immediately think about how things are going at school or among friends, but wellbeing actually starts at home in family life. In the school subject 'wellbeing', we explore

how social wellbeing in family life affects us as individuals. Family life is our base, the place where we learn our first lessons about relating to others, building relationships and understanding our own emotions. By having a good understanding of how social wellbeing in family life works, you will be better equipped to deal with the many new situations and relationships you will encounter in your teenage years. Learning about this now will help you create strong bonds and find your place in both the family and the wider social circles you're a part of.

Let's also mention another important topic under Wellbeing that is fundamental to our wellbeing and our ability to thrive in life. It's the topic of self-love.

What does self-love actually mean? It's more than just liking yourself. It's a deep understanding and acceptance of who you are - with all our strengths and weaknesses. It's about giving space to your feelings, needs and desires. It's about valuing yourself and taking responsibility for your own life and happiness.

We are all unique, and that is one of life's greatest gifts. You have your own interests, thoughts, feelings and dreams. No one has the right to tell you who you should be or what you should like. If you're passionate about art, music, science, sports or anything else, that's part of what makes you special.

We live in a world with many expectations, both those we impose on ourselves and those we feel from others. But always remember that you have the right to be exactly who you are. You deserve love, respect and acceptance - and that starts with you.

Do the things that make you happy. Life is full of challenges, but in the midst of them all, we need to remember to take care of ourselves. Whether it's taking a break, listening to your favorite song, spending time with friends, or simply sitting still for a moment, it's important to find those little moments of happiness and peace.

So today, and all the days to come, I hope you will carry this message with you: Be kind to yourself, remember your value, and know that you have the right to be the amazing person you are. Because you are unique and the world is richer with you in it.

Now let's get started.

This is a three-episode Wellbeing course with the three themes: family life, school relationships, and "being a good classmate". There will be both listening texts and exercises in the episodes.

Learning objectives:

Students can explain what "family" means.

Students can describe the responsibilities of a family.

Students can recognize examples of good and bad family relationships.

Students can list reasons why family is important.

Students can give examples of how to improve family relationships.

Students can identify actions that should be avoided in family relationships.

Let's get started.

Family Life: Your Base and Bridge to the World

Before smartphones, school assignments, and the first summer jobs, there was one thing that was always there - your family. Whether it's the people you live with, the ones you visit on the weekends or the ones you talk to on the phone, your family plays an invaluable role in your life.

But why is it so important to dive deeper into the dynamics of family life, especially as a young person?

Understanding Yourself: Your family is like a mirror that reflects who you are and where you come from. Understanding your family's history and values can help you understand yourself better.

Strong Ties: No matter how hectic life gets, family is often a constant source of support. Learning about the nuances of family life helps strengthen the bonds that can last a lifetime.

Life skills: Conflict, love, trust and many other complex emotions often find their roots in family life. Navigating these relationships teaches you important skills like communication, empathy, and patience.

Preparing for the Future: As a young person, you're faced with making many decisions that will shape your adult life. A solid understanding of family life can guide you in how you want to shape your own future relationships and family dynamics.

Cultural Connection: Families carry cultural traditions, languages and customs. Understanding and appreciating your family's cultural background can provide a deeper connection to your roots and a broader understanding of the world.

So, the next time you sit down to dinner with your family, attend a family reunion, or simply reflect on family memories, remember: Your family isn't just the people around you. They are a key to understanding your past, navigating your present and shaping your future. Diving into family life learning is like building a bridge between who you were, who you are and who you want to be.

What is a family?

A family is traditionally defined as: a social unit consisting of people connected by blood relations, marriage or adoption. Examples include parents, grandparents, siblings and children.

How many types of family are there?

As many as 37 different types of families with children have been recorded.

The most common is a couple with children together, making up over half of all families with children in Denmark. The second most common family type is a single mother with children. In the different family types, you can also have different siblings, i.e. full siblings, half siblings or bonus siblings.

Examples of family types can be:

Let's look at some examples of family types and give a simple explanation of each:

Nuclear family: This is perhaps the type of family most people think of first. It's a mother, a father and their children living together.

Single Parent: This is when either the mother or father is the primary caregiver for the children and the other parent is not part of the household.

Stepfamily (Bonus Family): After a divorce or death, a parent may find a new partner. If this partner also has children, they can form a stepfamily together, where children from previous relationships live together.

Homosexual families: These are families where the parents are of the same sex. They may have children through adoption, donor, surrogacy or from previous heterosexual relationships.

Childless couples: Some couples choose not to have children or are unable to have children. They still constitute a family type even without children.

Extended family: This is when multiple generations live together under one roof - for example, when grandparents, parents and children live together.

Blended families: This can be a mix of stepfamilies, nuclear families and other family types. For example, if a single parent with children marries someone without children.

Each family type has its own dynamics, challenges and joys. The most important thing to remember is that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to have a family. Every family is unique and has its own way of loving and supporting each other.

However, the concept of family can be understood a little more broadly to include social communities. Individuals have the autonomy to decide who they consider to be their family, so you can have a relationship with someone you choose to call family even if you don't share DNA, or biology, with them.

Why is family so important?

Think of family as a kind of safety net in a trapeze during a circus act. No matter how high you fly or if you fall, they will always be there to catch you and keep you safe.

Having a family or good family members can give you a sense of belonging. When we are surrounded by people who love us for who we are, it can give us confidence and make us feel more secure in our own shoes. Family is often our first introduction to love, trust and support. They can teach us values, traditions and give us memories that we can carry with us for the rest of our lives.

When we experience difficult times, it's often our family that stands by our side, comforting us and helping us find the way forward. Conversely, in happy moments, like birthdays or celebrations, it's also our family that we often share these moments with, making them even more special.

Families can also be our first social network. They can introduce us to new people, help us make friendships and give us advice when we face challenges at school or with friends. And while family members can sometimes be annoying or frustrating, it's important to remember that deep down, most family members just want the best for us.

Ultimately, family is like a treasure trove of memories, learning, love and experiences. Having a strong family bond can be like a compass in life's journey, pointing us in the right direction and helping us find our way home when we need it.

Family responsibility:

The family plays a crucial role in society and has a number of important responsibilities. Let's explore some of these roles and responsibilities:

Emotional support: An important role of a family is to offer emotional support to each other. Family members are there to listen, comfort and support each other through both happy and difficult times.

Upbringing and education: The family is responsible for raising and educating children. This includes teaching them basic values, norms and behavioral patterns as well as helping with personal development and professional growth.

Financial security: The family plays an important role in ensuring financial stability and well-being. This involves providing financial support, which can include providing food, shelter, education and other necessary resources.

Health and welfare: It is the family's responsibility to take care of the health and welfare of family members. This includes providing access to healthcare, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and supporting each other in times of illness.

Socialization: The family plays a significant role in socializing its family members. This involves teaching them social skills, values and norms, as well as helping them understand and engage in society.

Safety and security: The family's role includes creating an environment of safety and security. This includes protecting family members from danger, creating a stable home base and establishing clear boundaries and rules.

Caring for older family members: In many families, there is also a responsibility to care for older family members. This includes ensuring their physical and emotional needs are met and providing support and care as they age.

However, keep in mind that family roles and responsibilities can vary depending on cultural, social and individual differences. But overall, the family plays a key role in creating a supportive and loving environment where members can grow and thrive.

How to improve your family relationships:

Improving your relationship with your family can be an ongoing process that requires time, effort and communication. Here are some ways to work on improving your relationship with your family:

Communication: Practice open and honest communication with your family members. Actively listen to their views and feelings and also express your own in a respectful way. Communication is the key to understanding each other better and resolving conflicts.

Spend time together: Prioritize time together as a family. Plan regular activities or meals where you can interact and make memories together. This can help strengthen the bond and create a sense of togetherness.

Show respect: Show respect for your family members and their individuality. Accept differences and avoid judging or criticizing. Be aware of others' boundaries and needs and show consideration.

Resolve conflicts constructively: Conflicts are inevitable in any family, but it's important to deal with them in a constructive way. Avoid becoming defensive or aggressive. Listen to both sides, try to

understand each other's points of view and work together to find solutions that benefit everyone.

Be forgiving: Practice forgiveness and let past disagreements or conflicts go. Holding grudges can prevent a positive relationship. Be willing to let go of old hurts and work on building trust and reconciliation.

Show interest and support: Pay attention to the lives and interests of your family members. Show interest in what's going on in their lives and offer support when needed. Be a reliable and approachable person for support and encouragement.

Seek professional help if necessary: If your relationship with your family is particularly strained or difficult, it may be beneficial to seek professional help. Family counseling or therapy can provide a neutral platform to look at deeper issues and help improve communication and understanding.

Remember, improving a relationship can take time and is a process that involves all family members. Be patient and persistent in your efforts to build a healthy and nurturing family relationship.

What to avoid in family relationships?

While families are usually a positive influence in our lives, there are times when inappropriate behavioral patterns or communication issues can negatively impact family relationships. Here are some examples of inappropriate behaviors that can have a negative impact on the family:

Lack of communication: If there is a lack of open and honest communication in the family, it can lead to misunderstandings, emotional distance and an inability to deal with problems or conflicts.

Lack of respect and empathy: If family members don't show respect for each other or lack empathy for each other's feelings and needs, it can create an atmosphere of distrust, conflict and emotional distance.

Negativity and criticism: Constant negativity, criticism and belittling of family members can erode self-esteem and create tension and hostility within the family.

Lack of engagement and presence: If family members are absent physically or emotionally, it can lead to feelings of isolation, neglect and lack of connection within the family.

Inability to manage conflict: If conflicts are not managed in a constructive way and instead escalate into repeated arguments or remain unresolved, it can create a toxic atmosphere in the family.

Lack of accountability and failure to fulfill obligations: If family members fail to take responsibility and fulfill their obligations, it can lead to frustration, imbalance and distrust in the family.

It's important to be aware of these inappropriate behaviors and try to address them to create a healthier family relationship. This may require honest self-reflection, communication and possibly professional help to achieve positive change.

Family and school:

How can the family support the child's schooling?

The Law on Public Schools also states that: "Public schools shall, in cooperation with the parents, provide pupils with knowledge and skills". This means that the family must participate in the student's education, if you live in Denmark.

A family can play a crucial role in supporting their child's schooling. Here are some ways in which a family can provide support:

Create a positive attitude towards education: Talk about and demonstrate the importance of education and learning to your child and to each other. Show interest in their schooling and be a positive role model by showing commitment and respect for learning.

Create routines and structure: Help each other establish a routine that includes time for homework, studying and sleep. A well-structured day can help promote healthy work habits and organizational skills.

Be involved in schoolwork: Be actively involved in your child's schoolwork by asking about their day, homework and projects. Offer help and guidance when needed and encourage them to ask questions and seek further understanding.

Create a suitable study environment: Provide a quiet and distraction-free study environment at home where you won't be disturbed. Create a dedicated space for study and school that is well-lit and stocked with necessary materials such as books, notebook, writing utensils and perhaps a computer.

Communicate with the school: Build good communication with your child's school teachers and staff. Attend parent-teacher conferences, keep an eye out for important announcements and be aware of their academic progress and any challenges.

Encourage reading: Emphasize the importance of reading and encourage your child to read regularly. Share and discuss reading experiences together and provide access to different types of reading material at home.

Support in problem solving and homework help: Be available to help your child with problem solving and homework. Be responsive to questions, offer guidance and create a supportive atmosphere that encourages learning and problem-solving.

Recognize and reward achievement: Recognize and celebrate your child's academic achievements and progress. This can motivate them to continue their efforts and build a positive attitude towards learning.

It's important to adapt support to children's individual needs and respect their learning style. Remember, any support and encouragement from the family can have a significant impact on a child's schooling and well-being.

Now it's time for an assignment to build on what we've learned in this episode.

Assignment:

1. **Solo Assignment:** Write a short text about why you think the family is important.
2. **Discussion:** Find a partner. This can be a classmate or a family member. Talk with your partner about what responsibilities you think your own families have. Compare your answers.
3. **Reflection task:** Think about your own family and write down three things you can do to improve family relationships and three things you should avoid.

Once you have answered the questions, this episode on family life will end.

Thank you for today. What we've talked about today - family life - is not just a one-off lesson, but a lifelong journey. The topics we've talked about today all lead to self-love. I hope you will carry that with you far beyond the walls of your school. Knowing and valuing family and yourself is the foundation for a meaningful and happy life. The knowledge you have gained today is more than just words on a piece of paper; it is a guide for your personal journey.

Always remember that you are valuable and deserve love and respect, especially from yourself. Take this new knowledge with you, apply it and let it guide you when you face challenges and doubts. You have the ability to shape your own life with this knowledge as a foundation.

Go out into the world with your head held high and always remember: you are worthy, you are enough and your journey is as unique as you are. Have a great road ahead!

Here's where the ideas for teachers start:

Icebreaker: Start with a circle where each student briefly says what 'family' means to them.

Case study: Present students with a fictional family scenario and ask them to assess what's going well and what could be improved.

Guest speaker: Invite a family therapist or counselor to talk about the importance of healthy family relationships and give students advice.

Movie clips: Show clips from movies or series that depict different family types or dynamics. Then discuss the clips with the class.

Debate: Organize a debate where students argue for and against different views on the role of the family in children's lives.

Group project: Ask students to make presentations in small groups about different types of families around the world.

Role play: Have students role play different family situations, for example, how a family can handle conflict or support schooling.

Homework: Ask students to interview a family member (for example, a grandparent) about how family dynamics and roles have changed over time.