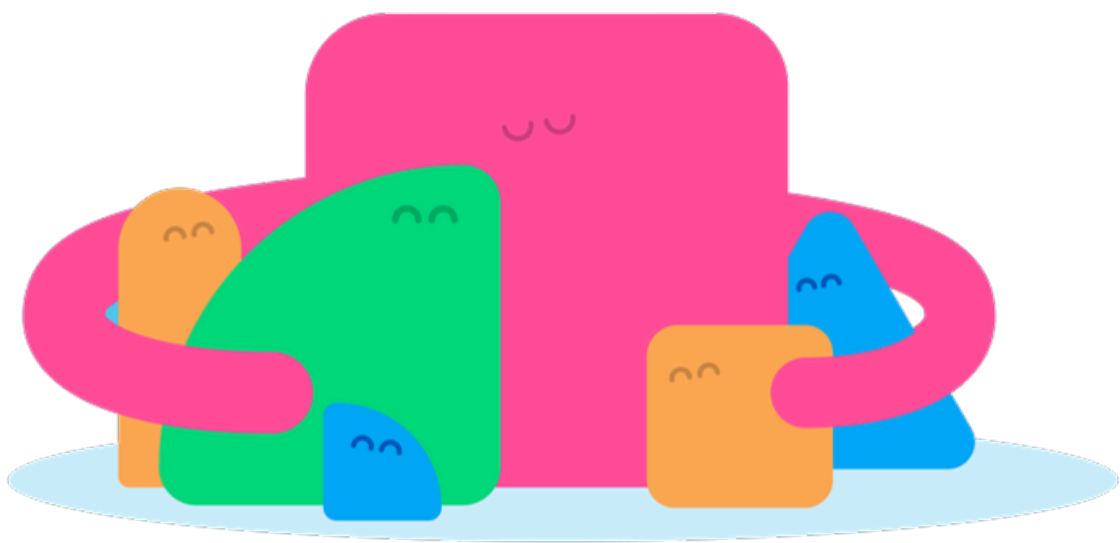




# Schools Programme

A free of charge, 10 week, teacher-led programme which aims to build resilience, increase wellbeing & enhance the emotional literacy of Junior Infants to 6th class school children



# A Lust for Life and the Schools Programme

- **A free wellbeing programme for Junior Infants to 6th Class.**
- **Easy to teach. Proven impact.**
- **Bring the new Wellbeing Curriculum to life in your school.**

A Lust for Life is an Irish youth mental health charity committed to educating and empowering young people, helping children develop emotional skills early through our preventative mental health schools programmes. The primary schools programme is free for every school in Ireland, easy to deliver, and built to support the new curriculum.

At the heart of our work is the belief that early intervention and education are key to improving the mental health trajectory of young people in Ireland. That's why we've created the **A Lust for Life Schools Programme**, a free, evidence-informed wellbeing and resilience programme designed specifically for primary schools. Every year, PhD-led teams in UCD independently evaluate the programme to ensure impact and quality. Our goal is to reach every primary school pupil in Ireland and we would love your school to join us on this mission!



## Why Schools? Why Now?

- Approx 1 in 4 children in Ireland experience mental health difficulties before the age of 16 (Department of Children, 2023)
- 50% of adult mental health challenges begin before the age of 14, this highlights the importance of early intervention (Kessler et al., 2005)
- One in seven primary school children experience low socio-emotional wellbeing
- These challenges directly affect school life: from attendance and engagement to confidence and learning in the classroom

This is why schools need accessible, universal, school-based programmes that promote early mental health support and build emotional skills early.

Schools are the ideal place to teach emotional skills early, and universal programmes like this reach every child, not just those already identified for support (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; WHO, 2021). Universal programmes reach every pupil and help build a whole-school culture of wellbeing.

## Minimal prep, ready to teach lessons, easy integration

**The A Lust for Life Schools Programme** was created with busy classrooms in mind to provide accessible, ready to use resources that integrate easily into everyday teaching and learning. The programme complements and links into the curriculum, requires minimal planning and equips teachers with practical tools to support the emotional wellbeing and resilience of their pupils. With programme levels available to all classes from Junior Infants – 6th class, the programme fosters a whole school approach to wellbeing.

Delivered through an easy-to-use platform, each 10 week block includes videos, lesson plans, and creative classroom activities that help children learn about emotions, self-care, and equip them with the tools to look after their wellbeing. Written by clinical psychologists Dr Eddie Murphy & Dr Malie Coyne, play therapists, educators, and informed by children and parents, the programme is grounded in the latest thinking in psychology and best educational practice—designed to support children’s **resilience, wellbeing, and emotional literacy** in a fun, age-appropriate way.

## Curriculum Alignment

The A Lust for Life Schools Programme is designed to directly support the Primary Curriculum Framework, with a particular focus on the key competency **Being Well**. This competency emphasises children’s ability to view themselves as capable and resourceful, to manage everyday challenges, demonstrate resilience, and adapt to new circumstances.

The Programme promotes these competencies by building self-awareness, confidence and emotional resilience through stories, discussion and creative activities. These approaches help children understand their thoughts and feelings, relate to others, and develop positive relationships – all of which support greater engagement in school life.

The Programme also aligns with the aims of the Wellbeing specification within the Framework, particularly within the **Emotional and Relational Education strand**. Across the lessons, children develop the knowledge and skills to:

- comprehend, regulate and express emotions
- show empathy and perspective-taking
- respond to challenges with a solution-focused mindset

Through age-appropriate activities, children practise these skills in a supportive classroom environment, helping them to build resilience and emotional literacy in ways that are meaningful to their everyday experiences.

## Free for every primary school in Ireland: no licence fees, no hidden costs

We believe that every child in Ireland should have access to this programme, and schools should not need to pay for something so vital to the children's development and wellbeing. As such the A Lust for Life Schools Programme is available to all primary schools in Ireland for every class at no cost.

## Minimal teacher preparation required

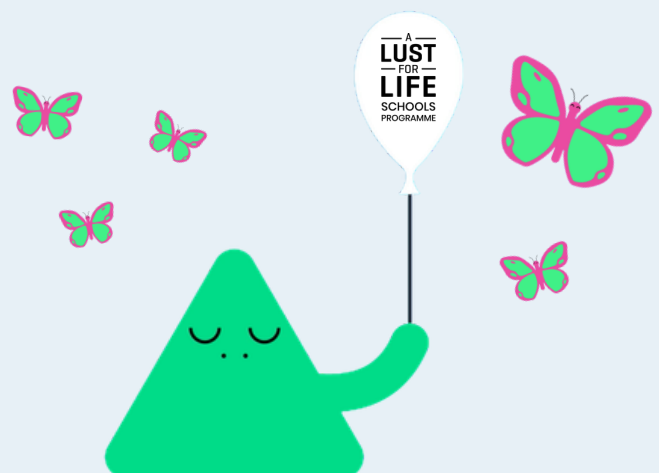
Designed with teachers, the programme requires minimal preparation. Everything is accessible at the click of a button. We created the programme together with teachers to ensure that the lessons were both teacher and classroom friendly, requiring minimal preparation, and ensuring that all materials are accessible at the click of a button. Easy to use, clear lesson plans, teacher support sheets, powerpoint slides, videos and worksheets are included for all 10 lessons, across all levels. With a comprehensive teacher guide and brief teacher training videos to support the programme delivery.

## Inquiry based, active playful learning

Weekly lessons encourage active participation through stories, discussion, creative expression and emotional exploration. This hands-on approach reflects the **Being Active** key competency within the new curriculum framework. In addition, the lessons are linked with other areas of the primary curriculum including Language, Arts Education, Science, and Physical Education, supporting integrated and holistic learning.

## Whole-School Impact ?

The Schools Programme provides a whole school approach to support your school's wellbeing learning outcomes while supporting broader curricular goals around communication, empathy, and creativity.



## **Independent Research Shows the Programme Works**

The A Lust for Life Schools Programme has been evaluated in eight separate research studies with Irish primary school children. These studies include large classroom trials and in-depth interviews with children and parents. Across all of the research, the findings are clearly positive:

Children who took part in the Programme:

- improved their wellbeing
- used more practical coping skills in daily life
- showed better mindfulness and emotional awareness
- learned useful tools to manage stress and understand their feelings

Parents also reported benefits, saying the Programme helped their children learn new wellbeing skills in a fun, relatable way, as well as improving problem solving and mindfulness skills. The programme also helped them as parents to support their child's emotional needs.

To track and measure some of these improvements, researchers created and validated a simple tool called the 'Feeling Better Scale', which showed clear skills based gains for children who took part.

## **Continuous Independent Evaluation**

Since 2019, the Programme has been evaluated every year through PhD-led independent research with University College Dublin's School of Psychology and more recently the School of Education.

This ensures the Programme is continuously assessed for:

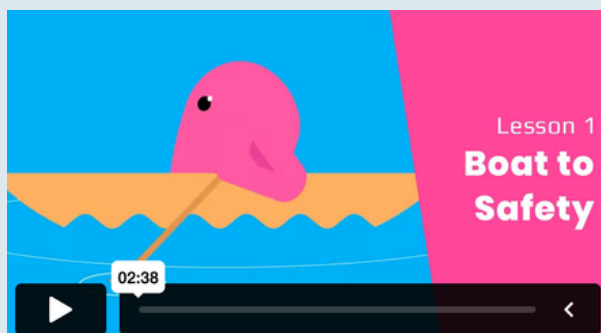
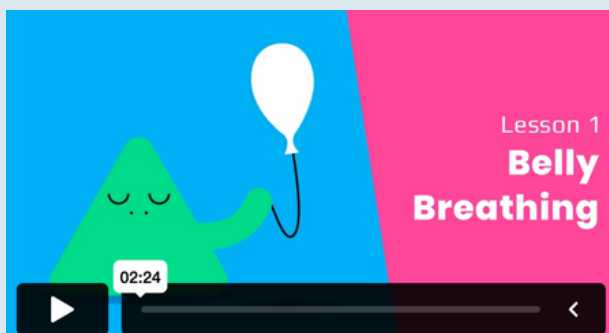
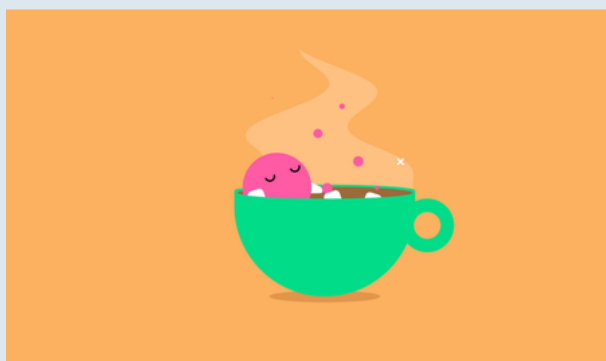
- impact
- quality
- relevance
- ease of use in real classrooms

The research provides a solid framework for understanding how the Programme supports children's wellbeing, emotional literacy and resilience. By combining academic research with everyday classroom experience, we make sure that the Programme remains effective, user-friendly, and aligned with best practice in both psychology and education.

## What is included in the programme

All resources you need to deliver the programme in your class (including Videos, Lesson Plans, PowerPoints, and Teacher Support Sheets) are available online on the website at [www.alfschools.com](http://www.alfschools.com)

### Video & Animated Content



# Lesson plans, activities and slides



## LESSON 1: Introduction to Feelings



### Core Topics

- + Recognise the Four Big Feelings.
- + Identify ways we can make ourselves "feel good".

### Goal of the Lesson

- + The pupils will talk about times that they have felt good, happy or joyful and be able to identify the Four Big Feelings - Happy, Sad, Angry and Fearful.

### Summary

1. **Mindful Moment** - Hot Chocolate Breathing
2. **Introduction** - Feel Good Spider Web
3. **Activities:**
  - A) Discussion about feelings we can have
  - B) The story "Along Came A Cloud"
  - C) "A Cloud of Colour" rhyme
4. **Grounding Exercise** - "Wiggle, Wiggle, Wiggle"
5. **My Resilience App**
6. **Try it At Home**

### Learning Outcomes

#### Pupils will be enabled to:

- + Show an understanding of things that make us "feel good".
- + Identify the Four Big Feelings.

### Curricular Links

#### SPHE > Myself and my feelings

- + Recognise and name their feelings. Identify times that they have felt these feelings in their own lives.

#### English > Reading and Responding >

- + **Develop effective communication skills**
- + Understanding feelings and helping students to express themselves clearly.

### Resources

Lesson 1 PowerPoint, Lesson 1 Teacher Support Sheet, Lesson 1 Parent Support Sheet, Lesson 1 videos (on [alltechschools.com](http://alltechschools.com)), Ball of Wool.

### Key Vocabulary

feelings	happy	sad
angry	fearful	trotting
galloping	below	sobbing
quivering		



## LESSON 2: Big Feelings - Happy and Sad



### Before this lesson

If possible, invite your pupils to bring in their favourite teddy/soft animal. This will be used when completing the Teddy Breathing strategy this week. If they did not bring one in, offer them something they can use instead for the 'Teddy Breathing Activity'.

### Core Topics

- + Compare and contrast the feelings of happiness and sadness.
- + Talk about how our bodies feel when we are experiencing these feelings.
- + Practice the strategy of Teddy Breathing.

### Goal of the Lesson

- + The pupils will compare and contrast the feelings of happiness and sadness through the use of a story "Along Came a Cloud".
- + The pupils will discuss how our bodies feel when we are feeling happy and feeling sad.
- + The pupils will practice Teddy Breathing as a strategy for self-regulation when feeling sad.

### Summary

1. **Mindful Moment** - Hot Chocolate Breathing
2. **Introduction** - "A Cloud of Colour" rhyme
3. **Activities:**
  - A. The story "Along Came A Cloud"
  - B. Movement to Music Activity
  - C. Teddy Breathing Activity
4. **Grounding Exercise** - "Wiggle, Wiggle, Wiggle"
5. **My Resilience App**
6. **Try it At Home**

### Learning Outcomes

#### Pupils will be enabled to:

- + Talk about the feelings "happy" and "sad".
- + Compare and contrast the feelings of "happy" and "sad".
- + Listen to a story and recognise the characters' "happy" and "sad" feelings, focusing on body language and facial expressions.
- + Learn Teddy Breathing strategy.

### Curricular Links

- + **SPHE > Myself and my feelings**
- + Recognise and name the feelings happy and sad. Identify times that they have felt these feelings in their own lives.

#### English > Reading and Responding > Develop effective communication skills

- + Understand feelings to help students to express themselves clearly.

### Resources

Lesson 2 PowerPoint, Lesson 2 Teacher Support Sheet, Lesson 2 Parent Support Sheet, Lesson 2 videos (on [alltechschools.com](http://alltechschools.com)), Teddy Bears, Music for Dance Activity

### Key Vocabulary

happy	energetic	sad	peaceful
calm			



## LESSON 2: Big Feelings - Happy and Sad

### 3(b). Movement to Music Activity

- + How did you feel when you listened to this music?
- + How did you move to this music?

#### Compare and Contrast

- + Which music did you prefer moving to? Why?



# Teacher guide and support sheets



## JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS SCHOOLS PROGRAMME Teacher Guide

- + **Try It At Home** – an activity for pupils to complete at home (in some cases with the support of a parent/caregiver if available) to consolidate learning from the lesson.
- + **Parent Support Sheets** – information for you to send home to parents/caregivers providing an overview of what their child learned in each lesson and further supports. Lots of useful psychological concepts in there for teachers too.

### 4. Lesson Overview and Curricular Alignment

This programme has been created with teachers, psychologists, parents and pupils. We know that teachers are dealing with an overloaded curriculum, and so, we have designed the programme to align with the primary school curriculum as closely as possible. The lessons complement the SPHE curriculum and also offer integration opportunities across other curricular areas.

Lesson Overview			
Theme	Lesson	SPHE Curricular Links	Integration
Big Feelings - Introduction	Lesson 1	Myself and my feelings	+ English
Big Feelings - Happy and Sad	Lesson 2	Myself and my feelings	+ English
Big Feelings - Angry	Lesson 3	Myself > Growing and Changing	+ Science + Drama
Big Feelings - Fear	Lesson 4	Identity and Self-Awareness	+ English
Self-Esteem	Lesson 5	Myself > Self-identity	
Friendships	Lesson 6	Myself > Self-identity Growing and Changing	+ Visual Arts
When Friendships Go Wrong	Lesson 7	Myself	+ English
Repairing Friendships	Lesson 8	Myself and Others > Myself and My Friends	+ Aistear + Visual Arts
Diversity	Lesson 9	To promote positive social interactions and relationships	+ Science + Aistear
Being Safe Online	Lesson 10	Identity and Self-Awareness	



## LESSON 1: Introduction to Feelings Teacher Support Sheet



### Goal of the Lesson

The pupils will talk about times that they have felt good, happy or joyful and be able to identify the Four Big Feelings - Happy, Sad, Angry and Fearful.

### 1. Mindful Moment

Hot Chocolate Breathing is a regulation strategy where children focus on their breathing. The video is a guided meditation pitched at an age appropriate level.

### 2. Introduction

The Feel Good Spider Web Activity will support pupils to share activities/things that make them 'feel good'. This will enable pupils to identify times that they have felt good, happy or joyful.

### 3. Activities

- Discussion about feelings we can have:** Teacher will ask questions to elicit the Four Big Feelings.
- "Along Came a Cloud":** Pupils will listen to a story where each of the characters experiences one of the Four Big Feelings. The story will introduce strategies to encourage emotional regulation for each of these feelings.
- "A Cloud of Colour" rhyme:** Pupils will learn the rhyme "A Cloud of Colour", which emphasises the idea that our feelings are like clouds passing by and like clouds, no feeling lasts forever.

### 4. Grounding Technique

The "Wiggle, Wriggle, Wiggle" video is played for the class to relax and refocus at the end of the lesson.

### 5. My Resilience App

The additions to the Resilience App in this lesson are Hot Chocolate Breathing, 'A Cloud of Colour' rhyme and the "Wiggle, Wriggle, Wiggle" video. The Resilience App can be a physical space/display in the classroom that can be added to over time, to build upon learning throughout the programme.

### 6. Try it at Home

This activity will encourage children to discuss activities and things that make them 'feel good' with their parents/caregivers.



## SCHOOLS PROGRAMME: Teacher Guide



### Aim of A Lust for Life Schools Programme:

The A Lust for Life Schools Programme aims to build resilience, increase wellbeing and enhance the emotional literacy of primary school children. By using a Netflix-style platform, children will creatively learn about their wellbeing and self-care with content that is rooted in psychology, has been written by educational specialists and created by children for children.

### How does the programme work?

This programme is designed to be delivered by teachers over the course of ten-week period and supported by parents through a Try it at Home section which creates a Home School Link. All resources you need to deliver the programme in your class are available online on the website at [www.ALFLschools.com](http://www.ALFLschools.com). We are also delighted to be working with Google's Be Internet Legends programme and have integrated some of their resources into the A Lust for Life Schools Programme to help support pupils' understanding of the digital world.

### A Lust for Life Schools Programme Teaching Resources include:

- + A letter for parents informing them how the programme works.
- + Ten lesson plans with accompanying resources, which can be used in class
- + Ten support sheets, which are one-page support sheets for teachers with further information to accompany each lesson plan
- + Ten PowerPoint slides to accompany each lesson
- + Ten educational videos – each video is linked to the lesson topic.
- + Ten mindfulness videos – each video is linked to a technique introduced at the beginning of every lesson



## LESSON 1: My Wellbeing Support Sheet



### Goal of the Lesson

In this lesson, pupils will explain and discuss the concept of wellbeing in their own words. They will identify the key factors which impact wellbeing, reflect on these factors in terms of their own wellbeing and determine simple strategies to enhance their own wellbeing and resilience.

### 1. Mindful Moment – Square Breathing

Square Breathing is a slow and focused breathing technique which encourages using the abdomen to breathe deeply. Square Breathing is a good tool for times of stress, as it requires slow inhalations and exhalations, with the diaphragm muscle in the abdomen moving downward as we inhale and moving upwards as we exhale. This helps our heart rate to slow down and helps us to feel more relaxed and focused.

### 2. Wellbeing – Discussion

This is a brief discussion about wellbeing, factors that keep us well and what we can do to stay well.

### 3. Our Wellbeing Rights – Class Activity

This is an empowerment tool for the class, pupils are invited to create a class poster of their wellbeing rights and encouraged to hang it up in their classroom.

### 4. When is our Wellbeing Impacted

This is a brief discussion about how our wellbeing can be impacted and acts as an introduction to the video.

### 5. Video – Wellbeing Wonders

This video introduces different settings directly related to pupils' own lives where their wellbeing may be challenged.

### 6. Video Discussion

This is a brief discussion about the video and gives the pupils an opportunity to discuss what was in the video and share their own experiences of what impacts their wellbeing.

### 7. My Wellbeing and Resilience

Pupils discuss and grow in understanding about how they can use their knowledge of wellbeing to boost their resilience.

### 8. My Resilience App and Learning Log

This 'app' is a collection of ideas, tools and techniques that the pupils will learn about during the A Lust for Life Schools Programme. After each lesson, they will have new tools and techniques to add. The purpose is to remind pupils of the range of strategies and concepts they learn about within the lesson.

### 9. Try it at Home

Explain the activity to the pupils in class. This activity can be completed at home, with support from an adult at home if necessary.

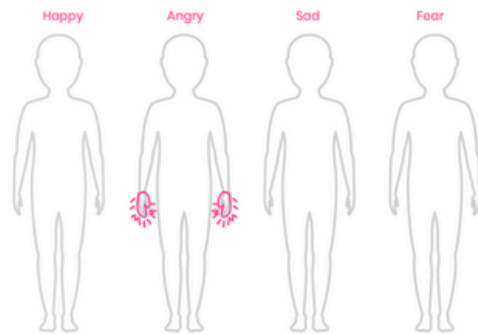
# Try it at home link



## LESSON 3 TRY IT AT HOME My Feelings

### Big Feelings

Look at the four feeling words below - Happy, Angry, Sad, Fear. What did we learn today about those feelings? Within the outline of the bodies below, mark where you feel those Big Feelings within your body. Use different colours if you like! Show your parent/guardian or a family member.



### Worry Gauge

Show your parent/guardian the Worry Gauge you drew in class, and talk to them about how some worries are bigger than others. Talk to them about the different situations you wrote for 0, 3, 6 and 10. Get them to practice Dragon Breathing with you to blow those worries out like candles on a cake!



## LESSON 2 TRY IT AT HOME Keeping Me Well

### You're a Superhero!

Today, in school, you drew yourself as a superhero. You talked about what makes you special and what you are good at. Sketch your talents and skills here again. Talk to an adult at home about what you drew. E.g. I drew myself caring for my friend, because I'm kind and look after others.

Draw your trusted adult as a superhero too. Label their superpowers! For example, maybe they are organised, always kind, clever, the best hugger.

What are the similarities between you and your trusted adult? (Maybe you are both kind, for example). What is different? (Maybe your superhero adult has more to organise than you do, for example).



## JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS Parent Support Sheets Introduction



### Dear Parents and Guardians,

A Lust for Life, an Irish youth mental health charity, have developed a primary school wellbeing and resilience programme, 'The Schools Programme', designed to increase well-being, nurture healthy connections, and enhance the emotional literacy of primary school children, from Junior Infants up to 6th Class. Over the last number of years, we have worked with a team of educators and psychologists, as well as parents and children, to develop a proactive programme, to help children gain practical skills to build resilience in managing the ups and downs of life.

We are delighted that your child/the child in your care is taking part in the programme at present. Each lesson focuses on a specific goal (e.g. Four Big Feelings, Friendships, etc.), with fun class activities and discussion, brief meditations, and 'Try it at Home' activities.

\*NB: If you have any questions about the programme or if you would prefer for your child/the child in your care not to participate in any aspect of it, please feel free to discuss further with your child/the child in your care's teacher or alternatively please contact [alltschools@alustforlife.com](mailto:alltschools@alustforlife.com) to speak to our team.

We've designed these Parent Support Sheets so that you can become familiar with what your child/the child in your care is learning on our programme, and to give you the opportunity to engage with the 'Try it at Home' activities with your child. The Parent Support Sheets will include a Lesson Summary, a 'Try it at Home' activity, and some useful resources for further exploration of the topic. Hopefully, they will help you in connecting with your child on these important life lessons.

We have also included some tips from our content creators, including Clinical Psychologist, Author, and Mental Health Lead for the Schools Programme, Dr. Malie Coyne, and Accredited Play Therapist and Attachment Play Practitioner Linsey McNelis. Malie and Linsey are also parents, and so know first-hand the many challenges and delights of parenting!

### Hello from Dr Malie Coyne and Linsey McNelis:

We are so grateful to have worked together on the Junior and Senior Infants programme. We are firm believers in the importance of the child-caregiver 'attachment' relationship, which is the most important gift a caregiver can offer a child.

Healthy attachments allow a child to love, to learn and develop across the lifespan, to be a good friend, and to have a healthy model for future relationships. They also enable a positive view of self and others, an ability to regulate difficult emotions, and the capacity to manage stress and challenges (this is called 'resilience'). As a child grows, other nurturing adults shape the child's ability for attachment (e.g. teachers, relatives, etc.).

Focusing on nurturing the quality of your attachment with your child at their early age can reap huge benefits for their development now and in the future. A child-parent 'secure' attachment is all about providing safety and security to your child, attuning to and responding to their needs; providing comfort when they are upset; sharing in joyful experiences; and enabling them to feel special and develop a positive sense of self.



## JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS Parent Support Sheets Lesson 1: My Wellbeing



### Lesson Summary:

In class today, the children were introduced to the story 'Along Came a Cloud', where characters experience the four big feelings - Happy, Sad, Angry and Fearful. The children played a game where they thought of times that they have felt good, happy or joyful. They also watched a video of a rhyme 'A Cloud of Colour' about how every feeling is okay.

The 'Along Came a Cloud' story is available to download for free as an E-Book on <https://alltschools.com/parents/>.

### Try it At Home Activity: "What makes me feel good?"

In this 'Try it At Home' activity, children are asked to draw a picture of them doing something that makes them feel good and share this with you. The yellow cloud at the top of the page corresponds to Part One in the story, where Orion is playfully galloping in the field. Show genuine interest in your child/the child in your care's picture, and explore with them:

- What makes this special for you?
- Do you think everyone in your class would draw the same thing as you?
- What else do you do that makes you feel good?


Talk to your child/the child in your care about why it's important for us to know what we like, and why doing these things nurtures our relationship with ourselves so we can learn to be our own good friend. If you like, further the discussion and tell your child/the child in your care what makes you feel good and why.

### Dr. Malie and Linsey's Top Tips:

Children (and adults alike!) often struggle with big feelings which they find difficult to understand and express. In the 'Along Came a Cloud' story, we included techniques to support children with their four big feelings, each represented by a coloured cloud. Explaining to your child/the child in your care that their feelings are just like clouds, that they're always changing and moving, never staying the same, can be a comfort to them.

**Co-Regulation:** Children are not born knowing how to soothe themselves and their big feelings. They need our help to regulate their feelings, because they are too young to do it on their own. When parents repeatedly help children to soothe their feelings, they will learn to do it for themselves as they grow. In order to be able to do this as parents, we also need to stay regulated in our nervous systems. This is called 'co-regulation'.

In the story, we included several examples of 'co-regulation'. This is when the animals soothe each other through the challenges they face, knowing it's okay to feel different feelings and supporting each other through them, building their sense of security and trust in the world.

A background image showing several young girls in a classroom, wearing teal school uniforms, focused on their work at a table. They appear to be engaged in a creative or educational activity, possibly related to the 'A Lust for Life' program mentioned in the text. The image is slightly dimmed to allow the text boxes to stand out.

"I have completed the A Lust for Life programme in my class this year. I have found it to be an excellent programme which is in touch with the needs of children in managing their feelings and emotions and developing resilience."

**Joan Harney –Scoil Bhríde Clane,  
Co. Kildare.**

"There would definitely be a big change in (my daughter) this year. She was less confident, maybe less willing to put herself up for a leadership task, but that seems to have changed quite a bit."

**6th Class Parent**

"We talked a lot, and it was fun and (we) laughed and it wasn't all just sad stuff. Our teacher, he discussed emotions and how he felt happy, he has a lot of stories, so that's fun. (We talked about) stuff that happened in our lives that we didn't usually tell people. It felt like we could smile more."

**5th Class Pupil**

## Perfect for...

SPHE, Wellbeing Time, Emotional Literacy, Whole School Support, SSE, Amber Flag Initiative, transition from primary to secondary, recentering your class !

Trusted and loved by teachers and pupils nationwide! Just look at the Programme's reach since it launched in September 2020...

# 1,754+

**primary schools**  
delivered the programme

# 242,244+

**primary school pupils**  
received the programme

# 7,585+

**primary school  
classrooms**  
have taken part

# 53%

**of primary schools**  
across Ireland

## Bring it to your school

Whether you're a principal, SPHE coordinator, or classroom teacher, the A Lust for Life Schools Programme offers a ready-made, evidence informed solution to help embed wellbeing into daily teaching and learning for every pupil in your school.

**Support your students' wellbeing.  
Strengthen your school's  
wellbeing culture.**



Register today at  
**alflschools.com**



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**Contact The A Lust For Life  
Schools Programme Team**  
alflschools@alustforlife.com