

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The **7 Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)** come from a landmark 2019 study led by Dr. Christina Bethell and colleagues (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health).

The research identified **seven key positive relational and environmental experiences in childhood** that are strongly associated with improved adult mental health and wellbeing.

The 7 PCEs are:

- Being able to talk with family about feelings
- Feeling that family stood by you during difficult times
- Enjoying participation in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belonging at school
- Feeling supported by friends
- Having at least two non-parent adults who took a genuine interest in you
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home



WHAT?

Key findings:

- PCEs show a **dose-response relationship**: the more positive experiences, the better adult outcomes.
- Adults with higher PCEs had **significantly lower rates of depression and poor mental health**.
- They were also **more likely to report strong social and emotional support in adulthood**.
- Crucially, PCEs can **buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**.

WHY?

Positive Childhood Experiences remind us that small, everyday moments of connection, safety and belonging are powerful enough to change lifelong outcomes.

Prioritise relationships

- Ensure every child has at least one trusted adult in school.
- Build consistent, warm, attuned interactions (PACE, Emotion Coaching).

Strengthen belonging

- Create a strong sense of class and school belonging and mattering
- Use inclusive routines, shared language, and pupil voice.

Build peer connection

- Structured opportunities for friendship, cooperation, and support.
- Buddy systems, group work, and relational play.

Engage families

- Support families to feel confident talking about emotions.
- Share simple strategies (e.g. 5 Ways).

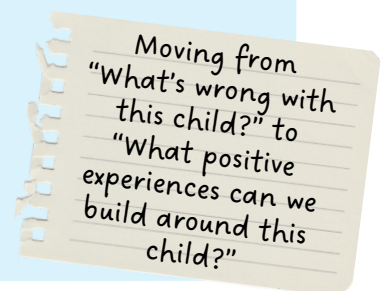
Connect to community

- Celebrate traditions, local identity
- Involve community members and role models.

Focus on safety and predictability

- Trauma-informed environments that promote felt safety.
- Clear routines, consistent adults, emotionally safe classrooms.

SEL?



FIND OUT MORE

- Bethell, C. D., Jones, J., Gombojav, N., Linkenbach, J., & Sege, R. (2019). Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample. *JAMA Pediatrics*, *173*(11).
- [Research summary](#).