

## Foundations of Wellness

### Grade Band: K-2

#### Student Objectives:

- Describe and analyze the three components of wellness: physical, social, and mental/emotional
- Reflect on personal levels of well-being

#### Materials:

- Student Activity Sheet: Wellness Triangle – one per student
- Student Activity Sheet: Wellness Cards – three cards (one of each type) per student
- Student Activity Sheet: All-Star Wellness Cards – three cards per student
- Images: Pictures of Wellness

#### Suggested Time Frame: 2 class sessions (based on 45-minute intervals)

#### Instant Expert:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **health literacy** is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” For children, this translates into the ability to make healthy choices, to think about and practice health-enhancing skills, to say kind words, and to learn about feelings and how to express them.

An important foundation of helping children become health-literate is teaching them about **wellness**. Wellness is more than just being healthy. It is the active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life.

Striving to achieve optimal wellness decreases stress, reduces the risk of illness, and strengthens social and emotional health. It is important for students to learn about wellness as a foundational piece because statistical data shows that these are areas of need by the time students reach high school. (YRBSS Data: Mental Health, Physical Health, Social Health)

Several different dimensions of wellness have been defined; social, physical, mental, environmental, academic, spiritual, and occupational. For young children, it often is best to

introduce the idea of enhancing wellness by balancing three of these dimensions: physical, social, and mental. These are the three dimensions that will be explored in this lesson.

To illustrate and reinforce balance of the three dimensions of wellness, the lesson includes a visual triangle. The triangle includes:

- **My Body: Physical Wellness** -- Examples include:
  - Taking care of your body
  - Being physically active
  - Having good personal hygiene
  - Having healthy eating patterns and nutrition intake
  - Being safe
- **My Friends and Family: Social Wellness** – Examples include:
  - Interacting with people around you
  - Getting along with others in a variety of settings and online
- **My Mind and Feelings: Mental/Emotional Wellness** – Examples include:
  - Liking who you are and accepting yourself
  - Expressing and processing emotions
  - Coping with the demands of daily life
  - Managing stress and pressure

**Balance** equates to the equal proportion of physical, social, and mental/emotional health on the wellness triangle. For example, if they have not slept or eaten breakfast (physical wellness), students' ability to manage stress will be impacted (mental/emotional wellness), and interactions with friends, teachers, and others could be affected (social wellness).

It is important to help students understand that **balance** can be very difficult to accomplish, but knowing what wellness is and how to work toward making appropriate choices will help them throughout their lives.

Within this activity, students brainstorm what it means to be well in the context of the three wellness categories. Ideas could include:

#### **My Body (Physical Wellness) Examples:**

- Focus on eating a variety of foods (including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and dairy – USDA's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans)
- Engage in daily physical activity
- Get at least eight hours of sleep every night

- Maintain good hygiene (wash hands, brush teeth)

### **My Friends and Family (Social Wellness) Examples:**

- Practice good communication with friends and family
- Show respect to other people
- Be dependable (do chores, keep promises)
- Support friends making good choices
- Share emotions with friends and family
- Participate in activities that improve social wellness (sports, clubs, or activities that include several people)

### **My Mind and Feelings (Mental/Emotional) Examples:**

- Show emotions by communicating with others
- Talk to friends and family when you need to
- Know what you are really good at (reading, sports)
- Handle stress effectively to solve problems
- Be open to new ideas and new ways of doing activities

Note: As always, you will want to be sensitive to individual students' unique situations and follow your school or district's policy when it comes to the collection of personal information related to minors.

### **Additional Resources**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- Physical Activity Guidelines: (Chapter 3 – Active Children and Adolescents)  
<http://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter3.aspx>
- USDA's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans  
<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>

### **Procedure:**

#### **Session 1: Introducing Wellness**

1. Begin with a discussion about opposites. Ask students to silently demonstrate the opposite of "up", "big" and "slow". If necessary, remind students that opposite means something that is totally different (or the reverse) of something else.

2. Now ask students to raise their hands and verbally share the opposite of “sad.” Write “happy” on the board when a student suggests it. Then ask for the opposite of “unhealthy” and write “healthy” on the board when another student suggests it.
3. Circle “happy” and “healthy” and ask students to silently demonstrate what they look like when they are happy and healthy. You should see big smiles!
4. Explain that when people are happy and healthy, they are often well. Write “well” on the board and circle it. Reiterate that a well person is someone who is happy and healthy. Draw a line between “well” and “happy” and “well” and “healthy” to show their connection.
5. To check comprehension, ask students to silently demonstrate what they look like when they are well. Students should look no different than they did when they were happy and healthy!
6. Explain that, today, we’re going to talk a lot about wellness. Write “wellness” above the other three words on the board. Ask: What word do you see in wellness? Underline the word “well”. Explain that “wellness” is all about making positive choices that help them stay happy and healthy now and in the future.
7. Draw an equilateral triangle on the board. Prompt students to describe the shape. Ask: How many sides does it have? Are the sides the same size? Does it look like it could tip over easily?
8. On each of the three sides, draw and write the following:
  - a. Draw: smiley face and sad face / Write: My mind and feelings
  - b. Draw: 3 stick figures / Write: My friends and family
  - c. Draw: 1 stick figure / Write: My body

NOTE: You may want to make a copy of this to use as an anchor chart in your classroom. This wellness triangle will be referred to frequently in upcoming lessons.

9. Explain that this wellness triangle shows that wellness means taking care of your mind and feelings, your body, and your relationships with others. All three aspects are equally important, just as all three sides of the triangle are the same length. The triangle is balanced and strong because all three sides are equal and it can’t tip over. Explain that



when someone takes care of their mind and feelings, body, and relationships with others, they are balanced and strong just like this wellness triangle.

10. Explain that, as a class, you are going to play a game called charades. While a classmate is silently acting out one part of the wellness triangle, it is the rest of the class' job to try to guess what they are doing *and* which wellness category it falls under.
11. Call students up to the front of the room to act out one of the wellness traits below. Serve as a second actor if the student needs help. Once the wellness trait is guessed, discuss which category (Mind and Feelings, Friends and Family, or My Body) it fits into. Add the example next to the corresponding part of the triangle on the board, and then continue.
  - a. Wellness Traits:
    - i. Brushing my teeth (My Body)
    - ii. Listening to people when they speak (Friends and Family)
    - iii. Moving and playing (My Body)
    - iv. Showing when you are happy and sad (My Mind and Feelings)
    - v. Making a new friend (Friends and Family)
    - vi. Reading a book (My Mind and Feelings)
12. Once it seems that students are familiar with the three categories, give each student a copy of the Wellness Triangle handout.

Invite student pairs to fill each side of the triangle with ways that they can take care of their bodies, their minds and feelings, and their relationships with their friends and families. Students may use words or pictures, depending on their ability level. Walk around the room as the student groups are working and answer questions as needed.

13. Ask students to share their examples for each category with the rest of the class. Compare their answers to the examples provided in the Instant Expert section and fill in gaps as needed.
14. End the session by looping back to the opposites with which you began the session. Explain that we are not completely well when we are having trouble with one, two, or three sides of the wellness triangle. Prompt students to silently act out what a person looks like when their body is not well, their feelings are hurt, or when they have no one to play with. Explain that taking care of our bodies, our minds and feelings, and our

relationships with our friends and family are all important so that each student is the very best person that they can be!

## Session 2: Wellness and Your Life

1. Review what students learned in Session 1 about wellness. To do this, give each student three wellness cards.
2. Review what each square means:
  - a. Smiley face and sad face: My mind and feelings
  - b. 3 stick figures: My friends and family
  - c. 1 stick figure: My body
3. Show students the wellness images one at a time. For each image, prompt students to hold up the corresponding card (or cards) that shows which wellness category (or categories) fits with the picture.
4. Explain that in order to be well, students have to make positive, healthy choices. For example, eating a variety of foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat or fat-free dairy each day can help their bodies be well. Being kind to others can help their relationships be well. Talking about how they feel when they are sad can help their feelings be well.
5. Explain that they are going to think about three ways that they are Wellness All-Stars. Say: "I am going to give you three Wellness All Star cards. Kind of like baseball cards or gaming cards, these cards will tell everyone which parts of wellness you are really good at." Instruct students to choose one wellness characteristic from each side of the wellness triangle. In the space provided on the front of each card, students should draw a picture that demonstrates their All-Star Wellness Trait. On the back of the card, students can write a sentence describing their trait.
6. Give the following example to increase student understanding: "I'm going to start with one way that I keep my body healthy. I know that I am really good at moving my body and playing outside for at least an hour every day, so I could draw myself playing outside on the front of my card. Then on the back of my card, I would write: I like to run around outside every day after school. Next, I would think of one way that I am healthy when it comes to my mind and feelings." If necessary, go through examples of each trait.

7. Distribute three cards to each student. Students should complete their own cards, but encourage them to brainstorm wellness ideas together if needed.
8. When there are only a few minutes left in the session, invite students to share their cards in groups of three or four students. Ask students to compare how their cards are similar and different from those of their classmates.
9. Explain that everyone has different parts of wellness that they are good at and other parts that they could improve upon. Add that, over the next few days, all of you will talk about how we can set goals for ourselves and make decisions that make us even bigger Wellness All-Stars.

## Family Connection:

Have students share their Wellness All-Star cards with their families. Allow students to take a few blank cards home so they can help their family members fill out their own cards.

For other tools to extend learning outside of the classroom, refer to the School-to-Home activities on TogetherCounts.com. Begin these activities together at school and then encourage students to continue them with their families.

## Community Connection:

It's important for children to know that there are many people in their communities who can help them maintain wellness throughout their lives. Brainstorm a list of community helpers who focus on helping others achieve wellness. Fine-tune the list and share related contact information for local organizations with families and others in the school community.

## Standards Correlations:

### ***National Health Education Standards***

- Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks.

### ***SHAPE America, National Physical Education Standards***

- Identifies physical activity benefits as a way to become healthier.
- Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.

## **Common Core State Standards**

Kindergarten:

### ***Speaking and Listening***

- Comprehension and Collaboration:
  - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
  - Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
  - Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

First Grade:

### ***Speaking and Listening***

- Comprehension and Collaboration:
  - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
  - Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
  - Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

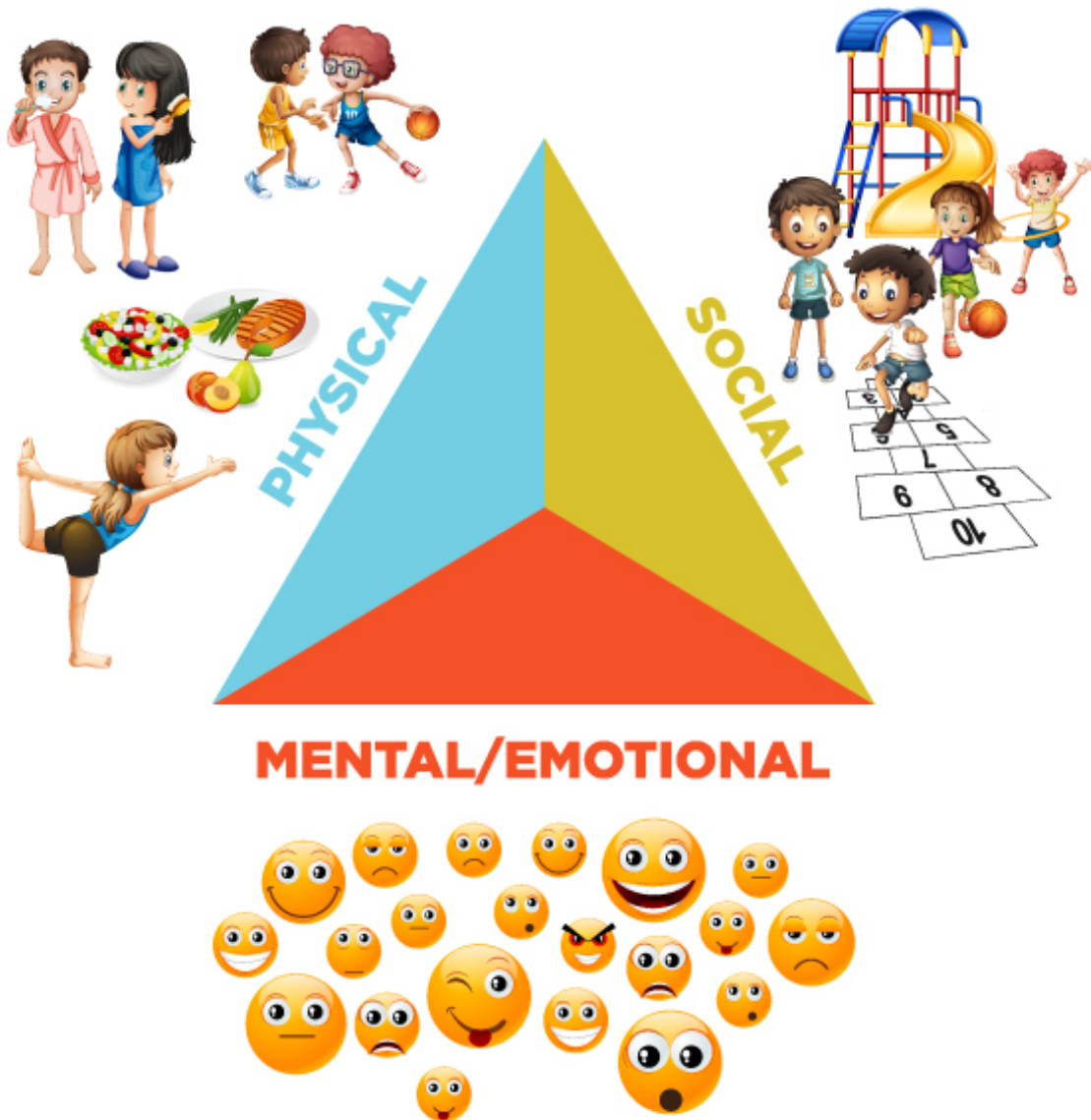
Second Grade:

### ***Speaking and Listening***

- Comprehension and Collaboration:
  - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
  - Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

## Student Activity Sheet

# THE WELLNESS TRIANGLE



## Student Activity Sheet: Wellness Cards

Scissors icon

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>MY BODY</b></p>    | <p><b>MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY</b></p>    | <p><b>MY MIND AND FEELINGS</b></p>    |
| <p><b>MY BODY</b></p>   | <p><b>MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY</b></p>   | <p><b>MY MIND AND FEELINGS</b></p>   |
| <p><b>MY BODY</b></p>  | <p><b>MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY</b></p>  | <p><b>MY MIND AND FEELINGS</b></p>  |

Student Activity Sheet: Wellness All-Star Cards

**WELLNESS  
ALL-STAR**

**WELLNESS  
ALL-STAR**

**WELLNESS  
ALL-STAR**

**WELLNESS  
ALL-STAR**



## Pictures of Wellness



















---

# togethercounts

HEALTHY DECISIONS. HEALTHY HABITS.







