

Integrating Wellbeing and Values in Children and Adolescent Development: Insights from Family, School, and College Settings

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ABSTRACT

Children and adolescents face many challenges and problems today. Since they spend most of their time in schools and colleges, these institutions along with families have a key role in shaping their quality of life and promoting healthy lifestyles. Families, schools, and colleges can serve as important channels for teaching and reinforcing values. The responsibility of instilling values doesn't rest solely with parents. Other adults, such as grandparents, teachers, and caregivers also contribute significantly. When values are deeply internalized, they can benefit not only the children but also improve the overall well-being of families and educators. Instilling strong values can lead to better attitudes, increased self-confidence, and improved behavior in children and adolescents. Moreover, these values help young people manage stress more effectively. This review aims to highlight how value-based education supports personal growth, strengthens resilience, and provides children and adolescents with a strong moral foundation for leading successful, meaningful lives and enhancing their overall well-being.

KEYWORDS

Children, family, social sciences, schools and colleges, social psychology, students, well-being

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INTRODUCTION

In promoting holistic individual development, schools and colleges should prioritize not only academic achievement but also the physical, mental, and social well-being of students¹. These institutions offer an ideal environment for implementing educational and health-related interventions², as educators have daily opportunities to influence students' lifelong learning and help reduce lifestyle inequalities among children and adolescents. This review examines several studies on the effectiveness of multicomponent, narrative-based strategies aimed at improving lifestyle habits and reducing risk factors in school and college-aged students³. However, the rise of digital technology and social enterprises has created new challenges for families, teachers, and educators, who are increasingly struggling to fulfill their traditional roles and responsibilities⁴. Children and adolescents now spend more time interacting with digital devices, which reduces the time available for family engagement and the development of core values⁵. More broadly, schools and colleges can play a key role in promoting students' overall well-being by adopting innovative, active approaches. These approaches should view young people not as passive recipients, but as active participants in promoting healthy lifestyles, values, and well-being⁶. A strong and comprehensive



commitment from educational institutions to support students' well-being and values can positively influence not only students' behavior but also that of their families. This review specifically highlights the potential of schools and colleges as ideal settings for promoting the well-being and core values of the younger generation.

INTEGRATING VALUE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Everyone has the right to achieve well-being and develop their talents fully, contributing positively to society. Since education, values, and behavior are closely connected, the education system plays a key role in promoting the values and well-being of young people, along with families, schools, and colleges⁷. However, recent changes in social relationships—such as more divorces, births outside marriage, and family moves, combined with economic difficulties, have made the educational role of schools and colleges even more important⁸. It is a moral responsibility for schools to focus on prevention and to teach students about well-being and values. Teachers and family members, who are already seen as “culture promoters”, should also act as “health promoters” and “emotional trainers” for students and adolescents⁹. Value education should be part of everyday teaching, guiding students to develop healthy lifestyles and grow in their cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and social skills¹⁰, especially when parental and teacher support is limited¹¹. Effective school programs encourage students to adopt healthy habits and think critically about the risks of harmful behaviors. Teachers should help students develop problem-solving and decision-making skills that protect their health, such as communication, assertiveness, self-control, resisting peer pressure, conflict resolution, and negotiation with others¹².

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS THROUGH FAMILY AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

The role of the family in shaping values and well-being in children and adolescents is complex. It depends on how family members interact to support each other's welfare¹³. It is highlighted that family function influences social relationships, psychological growth (such as value formation), and physical health. Using meaningful content, methods, and tools in education promotes deep, transformative learning, helping young people internalize knowledge personally¹⁴. A classroom environment based on trust and equal participation encourages students to discover their own life goals according to their interests¹⁵. Modern education needs to update teaching methods to promote long-lasting and motivating learning, addressing the limitations of traditional approaches that may not meet the needs of new generations¹⁶. At the same time, overly controlling teaching styles should be avoided to prevent stigmatizing vulnerable children¹⁷. Experiential and participatory methods, like role-playing, debates, real-life tasks, and artistic activities, help students actively build skills and knowledge while encouraging their personal growth and motivation¹⁸. These active teaching methods also create a supportive school environment where positive values and well-being flourish, preparing students to be socially skilled citizens who can manage their learning, time, and apply knowledge in real life¹⁹. Educational programs focused on values and well-being should begin early and support all areas of children's growth - physical, emotional, social, and cognitive²⁰. These programs should be carefully planned and monitored at different levels, including universal programs for all students and targeted support for vulnerable groups.

PROMOTING WELL-BEING AND PREVENTIVE INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Promoting values and well-being among children and adolescents benefits the entire school and college community. Preventive programs work best when focused on groups at higher risk. Early interventions for disadvantaged children and adolescents have proven effective in helping them cope with social exclusion and inequality²¹. Therefore, it is important to identify children and adolescents facing socio-emotional challenges early on, especially those from low-income families. Warning signs might include disruptive behavior, school refusal, or unusual academic performance²². The goal is to develop students' citizenship skills, especially their responsibility for personal and community health. This empowers young people to promote a healthier and more sustainable society and to advocate for policies that improve health and

the environment²³. Becoming a parent in a family with existing children can bring respect, but it may also be stressful if a child gets involved in delinquency, drug or alcohol abuse, or other illegal activities. This highlights the important role families' play in teaching values to prevent harmful behaviors²⁴. Although there is strong evidence supporting health education in schools and colleges, the success of these programs varies. They require full commitment from families, teachers, and school staff. Schools and colleges also face challenges, such as reluctance from teachers and parents to adopt new training and change their teaching methods²⁵. Additionally, limited funding and a lack of expert staff-such as PhD candidates, health professionals, and psychological consultants-make it difficult to provide targeted interventions. Building partnerships with private and public organizations could help address these needs²⁶. However, Children's literature also helps children navigate emotional and social difficulties while modeling appropriate behaviors and providing health and educational-related information²⁷.

CONCLUSION

Scientific research shows that schools and colleges are ideal environments for implementing well-being and value-based programs that support the overall development of children and adolescents. Promoting values and well-being in educational settings can enhance both students' mental health and academic performance, creating a positive cycle of growth. As primary institutions of learning, schools and colleges can integrate these programs into their regular curriculum through thoughtful revisions. Educators, families, and teachers need proper training to motivate students toward healthy and sustainable lifestyles and to use innovative, participatory teaching methods. This approach not only imparts knowledge about well-being but also encourages critical thinking about the risks of harmful behaviors. Families that actively teach values help guide children toward higher goals, strengthening behavior and decision-making. Without this guidance, the understanding and practice of values can weaken. When children and adolescents internalize strong, universal values, they are better equipped to manage stress and solve problems by relying on these principles. In summary, families, schools, and colleges play a vital role in fostering social responsibility, empathy, respect, and character development. This value-based education encourages ethical choices, improves social skills, and prepares young people to contribute positively to society. Ultimately, it supports personal growth, resilience and provides a moral foundation for a fulfilling and successful life.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Promoting the well-being of students and adolescents is crucial for preventing negative health outcomes and improving academic performance. Effective primary prevention must begin early, with families, schools, and colleges serving as key environments for cultivating positive values and healthy behaviors. School-based programs should strengthen students' intrinsic motivation to adopt well-being principles while fostering critical awareness of harmful practices. To support this, educators need comprehensive training in moral education, values, and well-being, enabling them to apply innovative, youth-centered strategies that encourage healthy lifestyle choices. As central pillars of education, schools and colleges hold the responsibility to integrate value-based and well-being-focused approaches into curricula and teaching practices, contributing to the broader vision of achieving better lives through stronger educational institutions.

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