

# Research, Applications, and Interventions for Children and Adolescents



Carmel Proctor • P. Alex Linley  
Editors

# Research, Applications, and Interventions for Children and Adolescents

A Positive Psychology Perspective

 Springer

*Editors*

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*For all those who are striving to improve  
outcomes for children, giving every child,  
every chance, every day.*



# Foreword

What is the purpose of schools and indeed of education at large? Is it wholly, as governments would appear to think, to secure exam passes or is there a wider purpose?

For too long, I believe, schools and education have been overly concerned with academic attainment at the expense of character and well-being. This is not to say that a focus on academic attainment is wrong – far from it. But this extensive focus on academic attainment is, undoubtedly, to the detriment of other critical facets in the lives and development of children and young people – such as character and well-being – which leave the emerging generation short-changed in what they should expect from education and life development in general.

With the emergence of the discipline of positive psychology in the last 15 years, psychologists have decisively shifted their focus to attend to what is right with people, building on their strengths and celebrating their happiness and well-being, at the same time as being able to respond to their calls for help in times of distress and need. A similar paradigm shift is needed in education. We should recognize the damage that is being done to generations of children and young people by just “teaching to the test” and leaving to wither on the vine their crucial need for character development and life lessons in how to be happy and become productive and fulfilling members of the society.

This is why, at Wellington College, we have introduced a consistent focus on happiness into our curriculum, with extraordinary results, not only in the atmosphere of the school and the health of our young people, but also a very sharp rise in their academic performance. It is my hope that many more schools will embrace this shift in the emphasis of education and focus on developing the whole of the person in our children and young people. Schools will not find, as governments appear to believe, that academic results will fall. Rather, they will, I believe, see the results rise.

In this book, Carmel Proctor and Alex Linley bring a focus to how positive psychology can contribute to this debate, both in education and the classroom setting specifically, but also in our focus on the development and fulfillment of children and

young people more broadly. The chapters cover topics including the strengths and well-being of children and adolescents, the role of family, peers and community in optimal development, the role and contribution of positive approaches to education, and positive youth development from the perspective of community activity and legal and policy positions. Taken together, they provide an excellent summary of the state of knowledge and practice in the research, applications and interventions of positive psychology as they apply to children and adolescents. Further research will inevitably be needed: this academic field, after all, is still young. But the authors make a compelling case, and they should be listened to with respect.

I thus encourage all those involved with the development of children and young people, and most especially educators and policy makers, to pay attention to the lessons of this volume in how we can create more optimal developmental contexts for our children and young people, building their character and well-being to equip them for the challenges and opportunities they will increasingly face in their journey through modern life.

Wellington College

Anthony Seldon



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