

Quick Information Guides for Educators

SNAPshot No 6

GIRFEC and Highly Able Pupils



GIRFEC and Able Pupils

GIRFEC – ‘*Getting It Right For Every Child*’ is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. It has several principles at its core:

- ✿ puts the wellbeing of the child or young person at the heart of decision making;
- ✿ takes a holistic approach to the wellbeing of a child or young person;
- ✿ works with children, young people and their families on ways to improve wellbeing;
- ✿ advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families;
- ✿ believes professionals must work together in the best interests of the child.

As you can see, the wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of ‘*Getting It Right For Every Child*’. The approach is based on a holistic view to support a child or young person to grow and develop well, as described by eight, wellbeing dimensions: **safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; responsible; respected; and included**. These are often referred to in short hand as *SHANARRI*. The GIRFEC approach aims to help all children whether or not they have high abilities. Most children will have their needs met through effective classroom practice. For some the needs and risks may be intense and require specialist assessments, specific action, extensive planning and longer- term, coordinated support from a range of services. Those needs/risks may arise suddenly or over time. The GIRFEC approach provides a framework within which all services can work with the child and parents to improve the child’s wellbeing. For more information on GIRFEC please see the Scottish Government website (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>)

What are potential needs/risks related to the wellbeing of Able Pupils?

An Australian author, Louise Porter, suggests that the learning environment has to be responsive to social and emotional needs of able pupils and this is in line with the GIRFEC approach. According to Porter to be well emotionally and socially adjusted, individuals need to have a healthy self-esteem, to feel satisfied with their relationships and know how to cope with stress.

✿ **Self-esteem:** highly able pupils generally have positive global and academic self-concepts but they may feel less positively about themselves in the realm of social domain. Having high potential is not enough to strengthen children's self-esteem; they must be performing well too. This indicates that underachieving gifted children might have lower self-esteem than high achievers, which can be both a result and a cause of their underachievement.

✿ **Social relationships with peers:** this is the area that often presents most concern for highly able children. Highly able pupils might be emotionally vulnerable because they need to adjust socially to being different even when their difference is a source of pride and so feeds their self-esteem. Some highly able children might feel inner conflict between their need to achieve and their need for intimacy since outstanding achievements can lead to peer disapproval. Some may find it difficult to communicate with their age peers as they have little in common.

✿ **Stress:** some highly able pupils might be more vulnerable to stress reactions not due to being highly able as such but because their environments might not meet their atypical needs. Moreover, highly able children are subject to negative life events and accompanying stress in the same way as any other child.

The social and emotional adjustment of highly able pupils depends largely on the extent to which their environments are responsive to their needs. The GIRFEC approach indicates that by acting to support wellbeing as soon as needs or concerns are identified, and well before crisis points are reached, we can ensure that every child is supported in a timely and proportionate way.

How do I assess wellbeing of highly able pupils?

You can draw on the '*Getting It Right For Every Child*' National Practice Model. It provides a framework for assessment, analysis, action and review, and helps you identify outcomes and solutions for individual children or young people.

✿ **Observing and recording:** the *Wellbeing Wheel* is used to identify areas in which children and young people need to progress in order to do well now and in the future. It allows practitioners to structure information (which may identify needs and concerns), and to plan. It is used to record observations, events and concerns. The *Resilience Matrix* and the *My World Triangle* are then used to gather, structure and assist in the analysis of information.

✿ **Resilience Matrix:** is used to identify children and young people's secure environment (base), self-esteem and self-efficacy.

✿ **My World Triangle:** is used at every stage to think about the whole world of the child or young person. It is particularly helpful to gather more information from other sources (for example specialist), to identify the strengths or wellbeing concerns in the child or young person's world.

At the end of this leaflet we include images of *Wellbeing Wheel*, the *Resilience Matrix* and *My World Triangle*.

Using the National Practice Model allows teachers/practitioners to construct a plan and take appropriate action to support wellbeing of highly able pupils.

How can I support wellbeing of highly able pupils?

'*Getting It Right For Every Child*' National Practice Model recommends the following approach:

✿ **Child's Plan:** is the statutory plan which brings together the relevant information about a child and young person's wellbeing. This should include the strengths and needs of the child within their circumstances and the assessment of that information which then allows practitioners to work with the child, young person and parents to develop a plan of action to improve outcomes for the child or young person.

✿ **Named person:** is a point of contact that children and families can go to for advice or support if they need it. The named person is available to listen, advise and help a child or young person and their family, providing direct support or helping them to access other services.

✿ **Lead Professional:** when two or more agencies need to work together to help a child or young person and family, the lead professional promotes teamwork between agencies and with the child or young person and family. It is a person responsible for implementation of the child's plan and making sure that the child or young person and family understand what is happening at each point so that they can be involved in the decisions that affect them.

From a pedagogical perspective, good practice in the classroom will help in supporting wellbeing of all children whether or not they have high abilities:

- ✿ create a cooperative/friendly setting
- ✿ promote children's autonomy
- ✿ encourage special interests
- ✿ teach coping skills

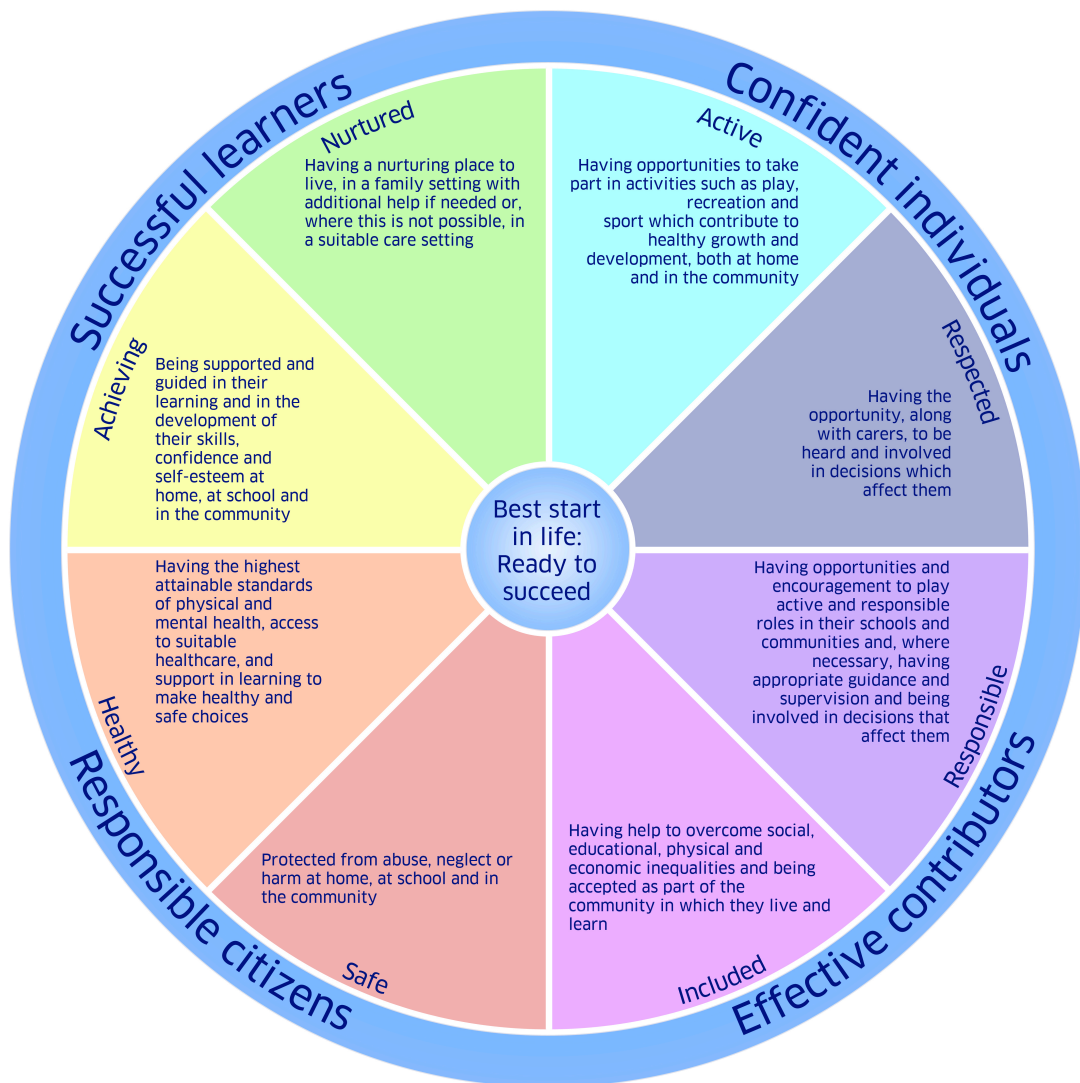
- * teach self-control
- * introduce fun
- * be sensitive to children's stress
- * be emotionally supportive

You can contact SNAP team for more advice on how to support children of high ability.

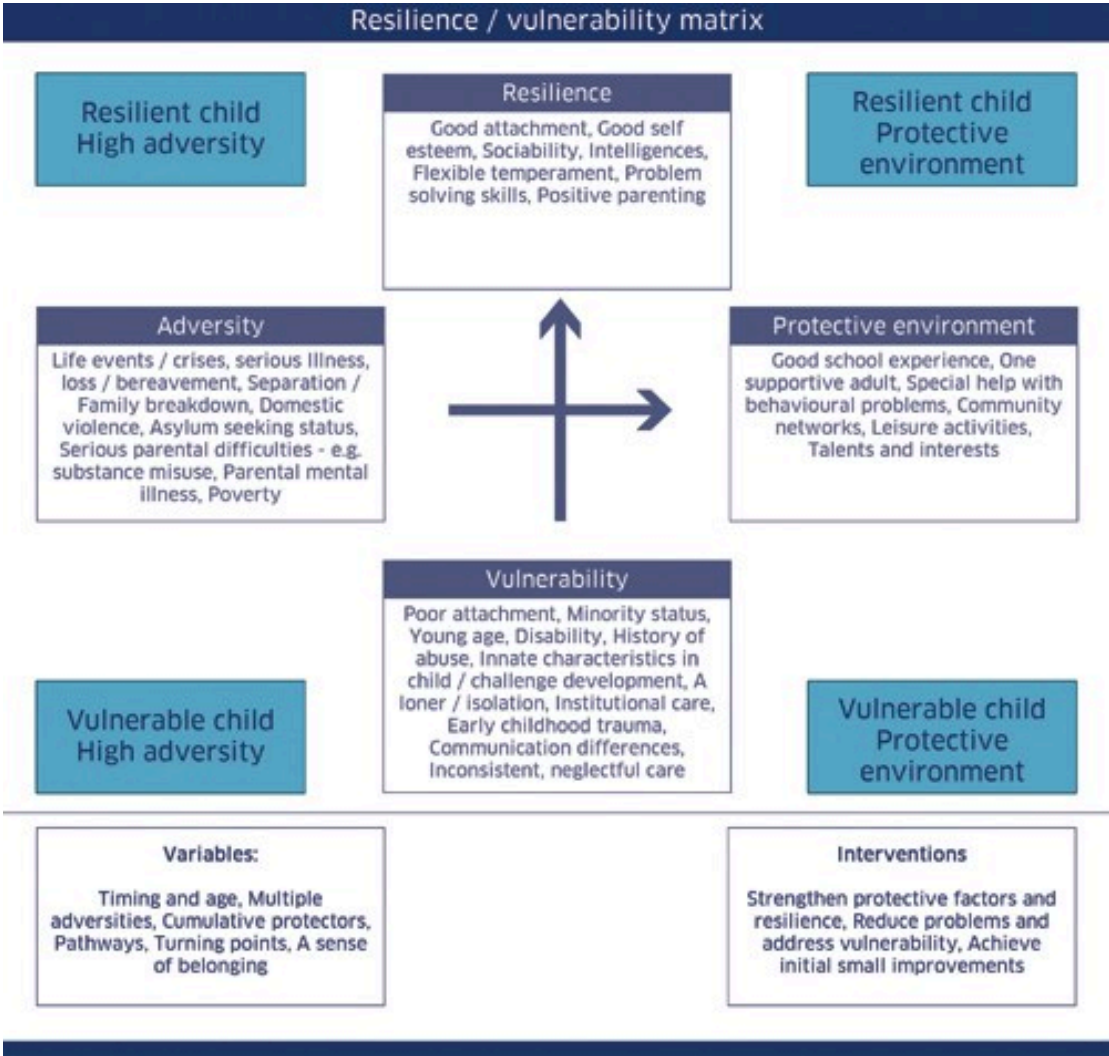
In Summary

- * *'Getting It Right For Every Child'* provides a framework of how to support and improve the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland.
- * The GIRFEC approach indicates that it is important to identify early (highly able) pupils who are experiencing difficulties to address their needs and improve their wellbeing.
- * In order to support wellbeing of highly able pupils assessment, analysis, action and review should be an on-going process.
- * Multi-agency planning is a holistic approach to address needs and wellbeing of highly able pupils.
- * Good practice in the classroom is beneficial for the wellbeing of all children.

Wellbeing wheel



Resilience/vulnerability matrix



My world triangle

