

Some time ago a whispering in the trees blew through The Patch

Caught on the breeze was a hint of a shift change

A hint that well-being within schools for all children would be a priority, that emotional literacy would be a developmental focus for all children, not simply for those who found themselves in a 'nurture group' - this very exclusive domain from which others, equally in need, are denied

Sadly, as soon as this whisper became a murmur, we heard of the new emphasis...the need for 'catching children up'; extra sessions, interventions, and cramming was the roar through ripped through the woods and blew away our hopes of a new era

We Pixies sat and wept

Fortunately for us, our emotional resilience enabled us to understand the situation, and carry on debating the situation with an undemanding of the needs of others and a clarity that comes from high levels of emotional intelligence!

Schools schedules include Initiatives such as, Time To Talk, and SEAL; these are religiously scheduled in to an already crammed timetable. We find this rib-achingly amusing! Emotional needs are by their very nature unpredictable and certainly do not adhere to timeframes. While these programmes have their place, and time spent exploring relationships and healthy lifestyles, and issues such as bullying, is valuable, the development of emotional literacy and emotional intelligence must be a cultural mindset that sits at the core of child development and runs throughout a school and home

Without high levels of EQ it is difficult for a person to reach their potential and remain 'well'

High schools and further educational establishments refer to emotional intelligence 'EQ' as a 'soft skills' and these soft skills consist of personal qualities such as: a positive attitude and resilience; self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, along with the ability to communicate; the ability to plan and organise; to think critically, creatively, and flexibly; to problem solve, and more!

These soft skills are highly sought after by employers

Academics however have been sighing and shaking their heads, for a number of years, at their students lack of these skills and are all too aware that the development and acquisition of the said facets must begin in the early years

We Pixies know that vast amounts of learning takes place in the first 2 years of life, and the basis of our emotional intelligence, this incredibly valuable soft skill, is laid down in the neural pathways in the early years

Oh no! I hear you cry, we're too late !

But hold fast, the good news is that our brains are plastic and it can change shape if we retrain it! It's NOT too late in the later years to develop EQ , but it is a missed opportunity!

Take a successful business person, no matter how great their IQ, may never make a great 'leader' if they lack EQ, and statistics show that EQ correlates more highly than IQ with career success; people with high levels of EQ make less errors of judgement; they are less prone to unconscious bias , they are more effective and appropriately responsive, Take a moment to consider your past employers...which demonstrated EQ? How did that make you feel, act, perform?

So, you ask, we now understand the value of EQ but where do we start?

We start with the open acknowledgement of our emotions, we name them, explain them, and we support children to co-regulate by helping them to name and understand their own emotions; we also need to own our own!

High levels of vocabulary are vital, if we never use a word such as frustrated, then how is a child to understand and use it too?

If we never acknowledge the full range of emotions, including the less desired emotions such as anger, or jealousy etc , then how are we to talk through these and come to an understanding of why?

How are we to manage these feelings and act positively to change them?

All emotions are valid, and this should be acknowledged; for some adults this approach takes time, but it is time well spent!

As we develop, notice, and acknowledge our own emotions, the better we become at recognising these emotions in others, and thus our empathy develops

When we understand ourselves, we understand others, and thus the world around us

A core element of Dandelion, the group of nurseries we founded and developed in 2014, is the development of EQ; but not all children have the fortune to attend Dandelion so Pixies is working hard to support families as they support their children to develop EQ

Pixies now that it is vital to avoid making assumptions about how a person feels and why; it is vital to resist the urge to tell a person in a highly emotional state that 'everything is fine' - it clearly isn't! And we'd argue as to what the word fine actually means!

It's also important to remember that to nurture EQ , EQ must be modelled, it must be a part of who you are

When children are co-regulating, you must read the emotion, interpret the signs and translate this back to the child; you must manage that feeling together and model how the feeling can be changed

When listening, listening with genuine interest, with empathy and be present, pay attention

These actions take time away from the timetable and schedule, and are difficult to measure and place in a league table, but children with a core set of these 'soft skills' are more likely to achieve and thrive

From the self-awareness developed through co-regulation, comes self-awareness and self-regulation; the development of empathy and high functioning social skills ensure a person has the EQ to meet their potential and is self-aware; it follows that a self-aware , self-assured person is less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression and thus will be 'well'

We Pixies know the importance of well-being for every child; we encourage outdoor learning as a family

We create Calming Pixie activity postcards which support parents as they support their child to self-regulate and calm

Our Tulip Touch and Taste Pixie activity cards encourage sensory development

Angelica Active Pixie is also on hand to help children to develop physically and be active in a way that encourages well-being while learning

Pixies Packages focus on the development of the whole child and aims to nurture a motivated love of learning.

If your little Pixie feels well, they will think well, and thus learn well.

This is the roar we wish ran through the country and we shout it to the trees. Did you hear it?

