

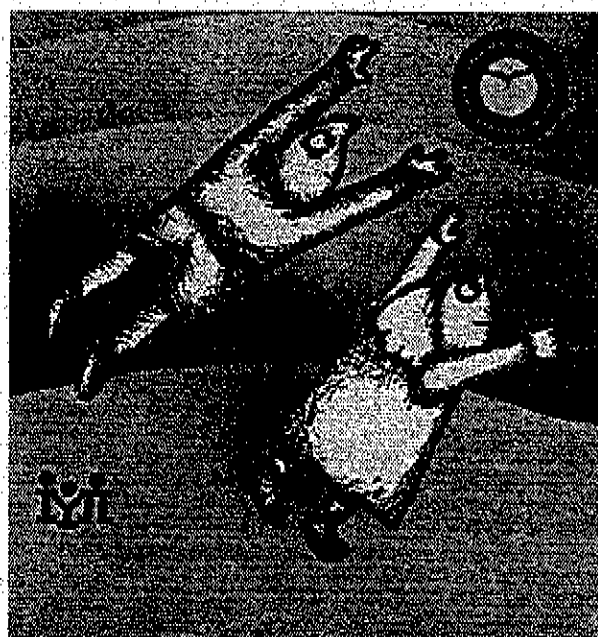


*First Conference of the
European Network of Health Promoting Schools*

*“The Health Promoting School -
an investment in education, health and democracy”*

Thessaloniki-Halkidiki, Greece, 1-5 May 1997

Conference resolution



Every child and young person in Europe has the right, and should have the opportunity, to be educated in a health promoting school

Evidence shows us that the determinants of both education and health are indivisibly linked. There is a dynamic at work which cannot be ignored if we are to protect, sustain and enhance the education and health of our young people. The European Network of Health Promoting Schools has indicated that the successful implementation of health promoting school policies, principles and methods, can contribute significantly to the educational experience of all young people living and learning within them. The health promoting school has been shown to be an investment in both education and in health. Moreover the Network has a major positive impact upon all those who teach, administer, maintain and support the schools and their community.

Schools are the prime force in creating a generation with raised expectations and high educational achievements. Health promoting schools will have a substantial impact in reducing inequities in society, thereby contributing to the health and wealth of the population at large.

The health promoting school is based upon a social model of health. This emphasizes the entire organization of the school as well as focusing upon the individual. At the heart of the model is the young person, who is viewed as a whole individual within a dynamic environment. Such an approach creates a highly supportive social setting which influences the visions, perceptions and actions of all who live, work, play and learn in the school. This generates a positive climate which influences the way relationships are formed, the decisions of young people are made, and their values and attitudes are developed.

This Conference resolution, which advocates government action for full implementation of the health promoting school concept throughout Europe, has been agreed, at the First Conference of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. The resolution is designed to encourage the formulation of policy, including legislation, and indicate what needs to be put in place by way of enabling mechanisms. The resolution defines the principles and actions necessary to realize the full potential of the health promoting school.

This Conference, which reflects the views of a wide range of professionals from 43 countries, urges the governments of all European countries to adopt the concept of the "Health Promoting School" and calls upon them to create the conditions for the following principles to be put into practice.

1. DEMOCRACY

The health promoting school is founded on democratic principles conducive to the promotion of learning, personal and social development, and health.

2. ***EQUITY***

The health promoting school ensures that the principle of equity is enshrined within the educational experience. This guarantees that schools are free from oppression, fear and ridicule. The health promoting school provides equal access for all to the full range of educational opportunities. The aim of the health promoting school is to foster the emotional and social development of every individual, enabling each to attain his or her full potential free from discrimination.

3. ***EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION COMPETENCE***

The health promoting school improves young people's abilities to take action and generate change. It provides a setting within which they, working together with their teachers and others, can gain a sense of achievement. Young people's empowerment, linked to their visions and ideas, enables them to influence their lives and living conditions. This is achieved through quality educational policies and practices, which provide opportunities for participation in critical decision making.

4. ***SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT***

The health promoting school places emphasis on the school environment, both physical and social, as a crucial factor in promoting and sustaining health. The environment becomes an invaluable resource for effective health promotion, through the nurturing of policies which promote well-being. This includes the formulation and monitoring of health and safety measures, and the introduction of appropriate management structures.

5. ***CURRICULUM***

The health promoting school's curriculum provides opportunities for young people to gain knowledge and insight, and to acquire essential life skills. The curriculum must be relevant to the needs of young people, both now and in the future, as well as stimulating their creativity, encouraging them to learn and providing them with necessary learning skills. The curriculum of a health promoting school also is an inspiration to teachers and others working in the school. It also acts as a stimulus for their own personal and professional development.

6. ***TEACHER TRAINING***

The training of teachers is an investment in health as well as education. Legislation, together with appropriate incentives, must guide the structures of teacher training, both initial and in-service, using the conceptual framework of the health promoting school.

7. ***MEASURING SUCCESS***

Health promoting schools assess the effectiveness of their actions upon the school and the community. Measuring success is viewed as a means of support and empowerment, and a process through which health promoting school principles can be applied to their most effective ends.

8. **COLLABORATION**

Shared responsibility and close collaboration between Ministries, and in particular the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, is a central requirement in the strategic planning for the health promoting school. The partnership demonstrated at national level is mirrored at regional and local levels. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability must be established and clarified for all parties.

9. **COMMUNITIES**

Parents and the school community have a vital role to play in leading, supporting and re-enforcing the concept of school health promotion. Working in partnership, schools, parents, NGO's and the local community, represent a powerful force for positive change. Similarly, young people themselves are more likely to become active citizens in their local communities. Jointly, the school and its community will have a positive impact in creating a social and physical environment conducive to better health.

10. **SUSTAINABILITY**

All levels of government must commit resources to health promotion in schools. This investment will contribute to the long-term, sustainable development of the wider community. In return, communities will increasingly become a resource for their schools.

Investing in the Future

These principles are enshrined within the concept and practice of the health promoting school. They provide the basis for investing in education, health and democracy for generations to come.

The Conference invites the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the WHO Regional Office for Europe to continue their support and leadership for this important work. The Conference asks all three organizations to act on this resolution.

Every child should now have the right to benefit from the health promoting school initiative.
