

Working Together to Make Our Children and Youth Successful

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What should we aim for?

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.

UNICEF, 2007

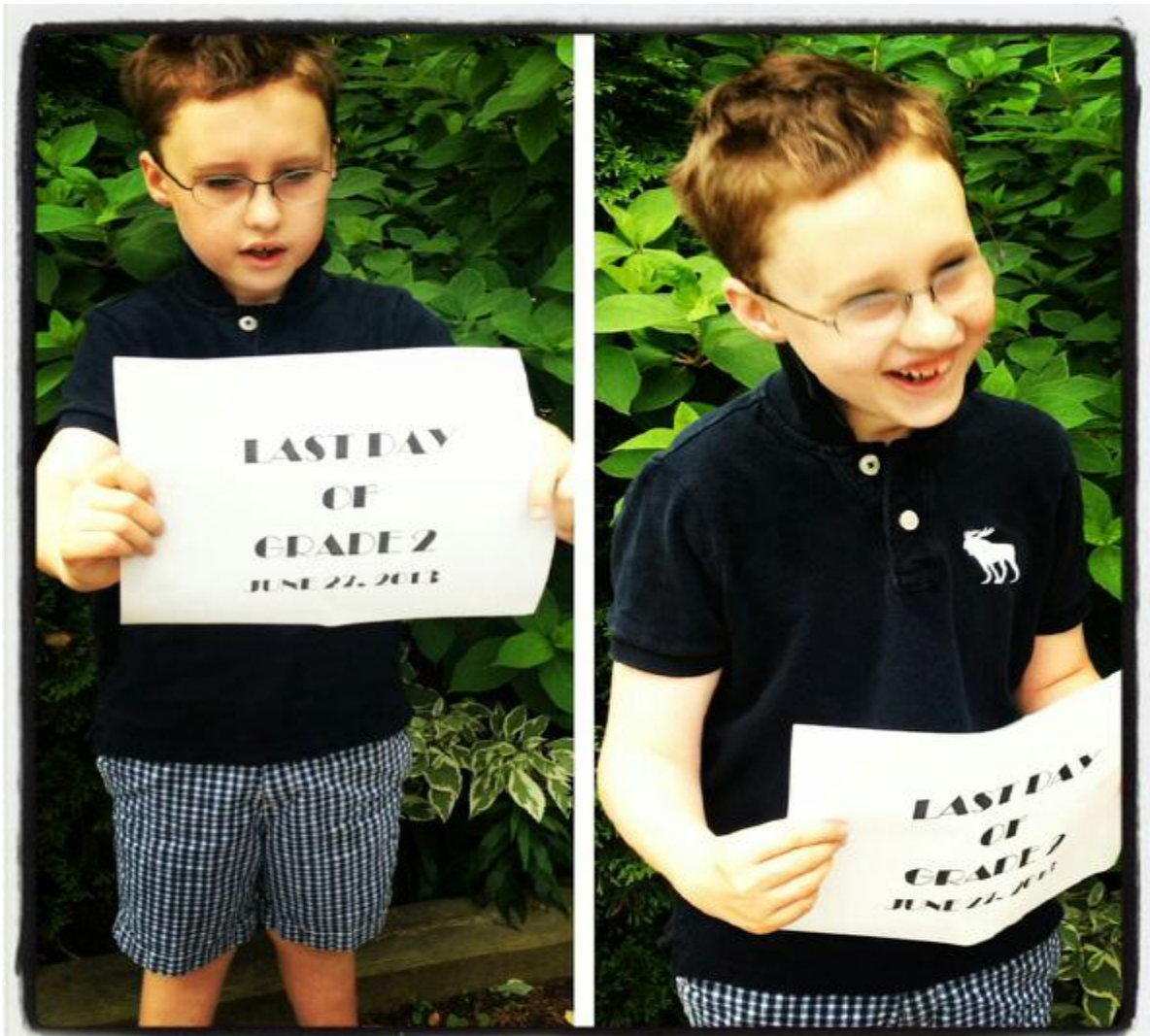


Parents' hope for our children

- “happy, well-balanced, engaged with family/community/work/life”
- We want them to have meaningful, productive, fulfilling lives
- **WHAT DO THEY NEED TO BE ABLE TO DEVELOP INTO SUCH ADULTS?**



What we want to see!

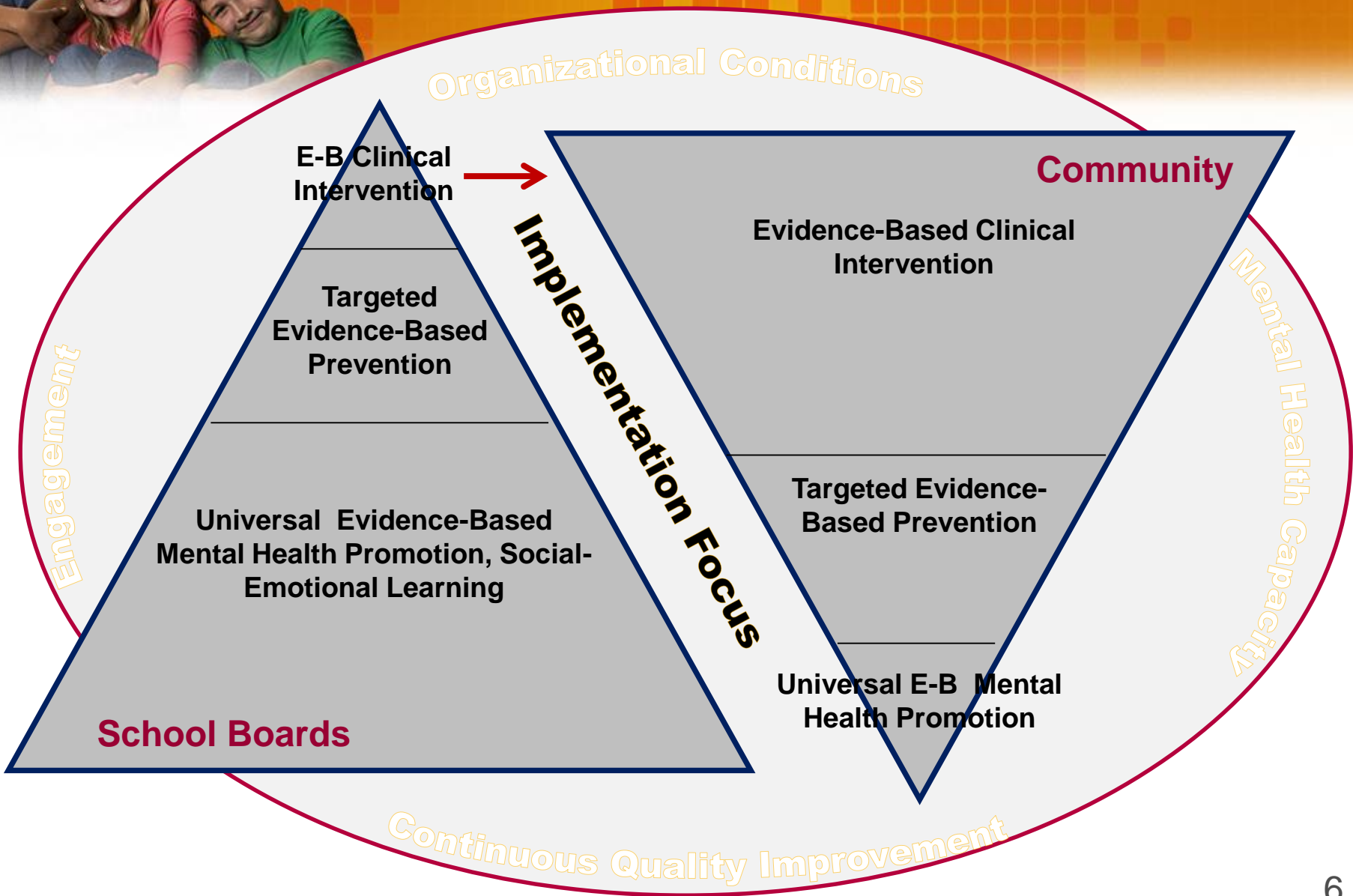




What we want to see!



Tiered Support in Systems of Care





Achieving Excellence Goals

- **Achieving Excellence:** Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.
- **Ensuring Equity:** All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.
- **Promoting Well-Being:** All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.
- **Enhancing Public Confidence:** Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.



Children with a sense of well-being feel:

- Physically well, nourished, and active
- Physically, psychologically and culturally safe
- Loved, included, valued and supported at home, school and in the community
- Able to participate in productive activities including being academically successful
- Able to form and sustain healthy relationships with adults and peers
- Able to cope with adversity – resilient
- That adults care about their well-being
- That they have a “good” future



Giving our kids a sense of well-being

....

**“RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS,
RELATIONSHIPS”**

**“relationships” are the “active
ingredients” of the environment’s
influence on healthy child development”**

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004)



It's all about relationships!

- Children/youth need loving, consistent, predictable relationships with adults at home and school
- Accepting, empathic, proactive, playful and curious adults
- But we aren't perfect so "breaks" are inevitable and therefore, "repairs" are crucial – adults are responsible
- "we can't control the wind but we can adjust our sails" – Yiddish proverb



Shopping with grampie



You need earphones to hear grampie!



Don't leave me alone!

Three children are smiling and looking towards the camera. The child on the left is a boy with dark skin and short hair, wearing an orange shirt. The child in the middle is a girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink shirt. The child on the right is a boy with dark hair, wearing a green shirt. They are all smiling and appear to be in a happy, social setting.

So what do we do in our relationships?

The key skills we teach children are:

- Self-awareness
- Managing emotions
- Problem-solving
- Self-motivation
- Empathy
- Managing relationships

And they are what enable us to be effective role models!



What can we teach in relationships!

- The work of Dweck and her colleagues makes it clear that students can be taught that ability is set and fixed or can be increased by working and that these beliefs impact achievement
- The work of Seligman and his colleagues! shows that we can teach children to be optimists

SO MANY THINGS THAT WE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT INNATE AND UNCHANGABLE CAN IN FACT BE LEARNED OR MALLEABLE



Peterson and Seligman's list of strengths/virtues (2004)

creativity	curiosity	open-mindedness
love of learning	perspective	bravery
persistence	integrity	vitality
love	kindness	social intelligence
citizenship	fairness	leadership
forgiveness	humility	prudence
self-regulation	awe/wonder	gratitude
hope	humour	spirituality

qualities that enable us to have a good life!



A Minimum Set of Strengths?

WHAT DO THEY NEED TO SUCCEED?

- perseverance
- self-control
- vitality
- social intelligence
- gratitude
- optimism
- curiosity

(Tough, 2012 – How Children Succeed)



Self-control is **Critical!**

Self-control/self-discipline/willpower/conscientiousness are important to outcomes in the short and long-term

Short – Duckworth grade 8 achievement

Long - Caspi and Moffitt – life outcomes at 32



Grit/perseverance is interesting!

Duckworth created a 12 item scale – 3 minutes to complete

Grit/perseverance scores predict:

- which university students with low admission grades will succeed
- which students will “survive” to late rounds in the spelling bee contest
- which cadets will survive the orientation at West point



Strengths/virtues are habits that are learned!

creativity curiosity open-mindedness
love of learning perspective bravery
persistence integrity vitality
love kindness social intelligence
citizenship fairness leadership
forgiveness humility prudence
self-regulation awe/wonder gratitude
hope humour spirituality

We acquire these qualities/habits in our relationships with adults!



The best way to build character attributes

We have to get our children and youth to attempt things where there is a real and serious possibility of failure!

Teach children and youth to be clear about their “motivations” (even dream big) but to pay attention to the realistic obstacles that make success more difficult!

Get them to make “conscientiousness” their “default” setting!



How does resilience develop?

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE: RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS!

CHARACTERISTICS THAT PROMOTE RESILIENCE:

- **Good natured and affectionate**
- **Effective emotional and behavioural regulation strategies**
- **Good cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills**
- **Positive view of self**
- **Good social skills – perceptive, assertive**
- **Has sense of self-efficacy**
- **Has future orientation**
- **Delays gratification**

WHERE DO SUCH CHARACTERISTICS COME FROM? HOW DID WE GET OURS?



Ungar's social ecology of resilience

7 resources to create resilience

- Access to material resources
- Access to supportive relationships
- Developing a desirable personal identity
- Experiences of power and control
- Knowledge of and adherence to cultural traditions
- Experiences of social justice
- Experience of social cohesion (including spiritual)

Kids need to learn to navigate and negotiate



Can' wait to fall!



I can hit when grampie pitches properly!



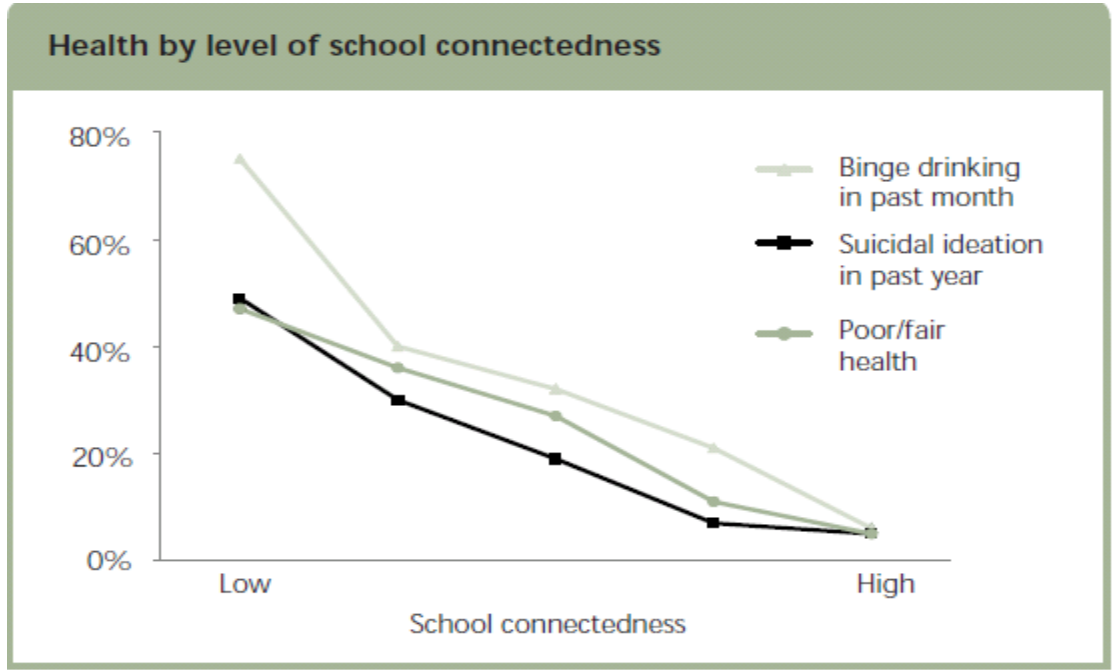
Connectedness

Students who had one caregiver at home when they woke up in the morning, in the same room as them when they ate their evening meal, or at home when they went to bed on most of the past five school days reported higher connectedness with their mother and father figures compared to students whose caregiver was absent on all five days.

McCreary Centre Report 2009



RISK BEHAVIOURS AND CONNECTEDNESS





Relating and Engaging

**SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRE SKILLS
AND EFFORT**

**ENGAGEMENT REQUIRES SELECTION, FOCUS
AND PERSISTENCE**

**PARENTS AND EDUCATORS WORK TOGETHER
TO PROVIDE THESE ENGAGED
RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO
MAKING OUR KIDS RESILIENT/SUCCESSFUL!**

IT'S OUR JOB TO STAY CONNECTED!

Building trust, skills and resilience together!



Building trust, skills and resilience together!



MENTAL HEALTH



Thank You!

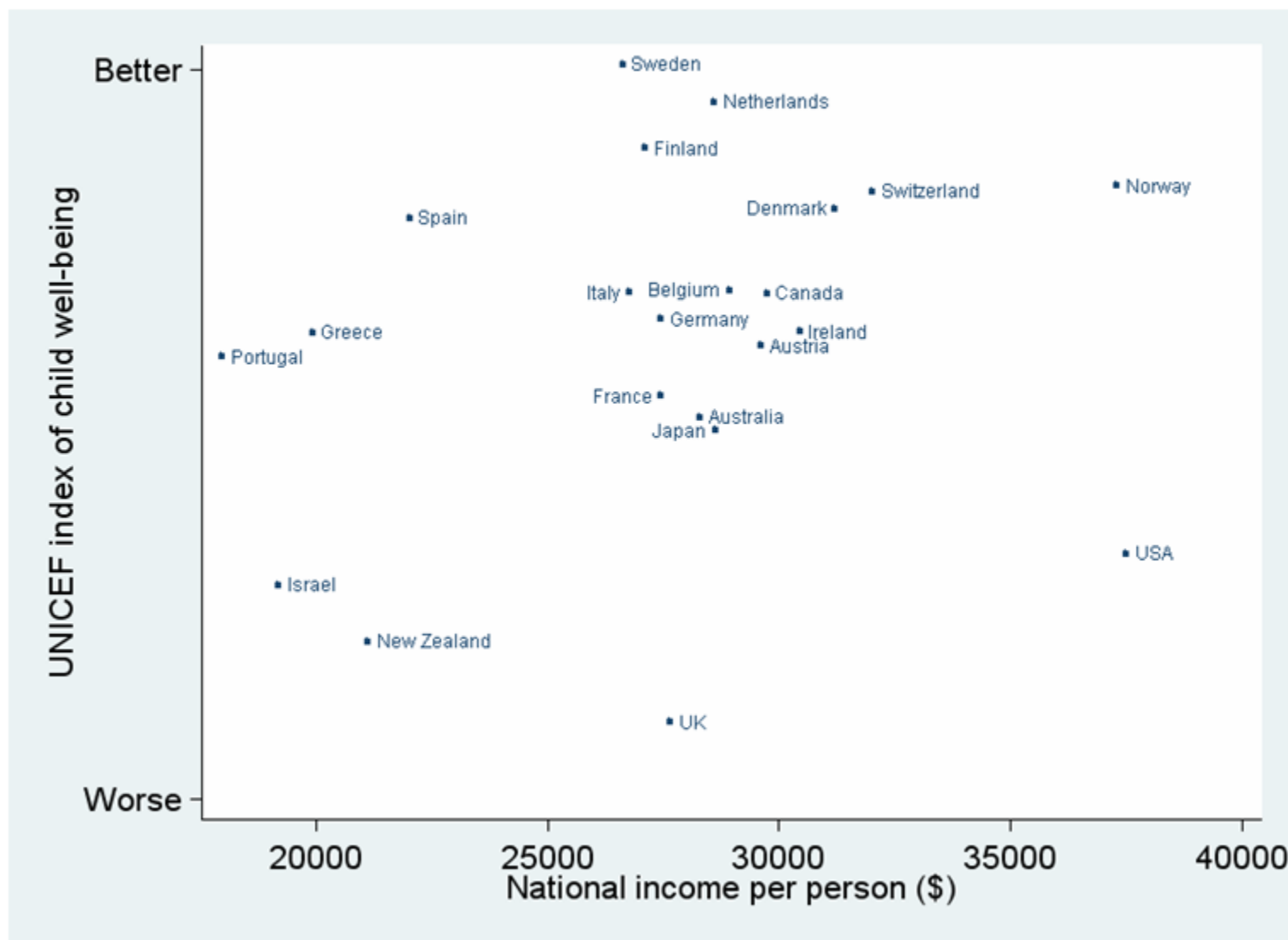
SickKids®



Child Well-being is Better in More Equal Rich Countries



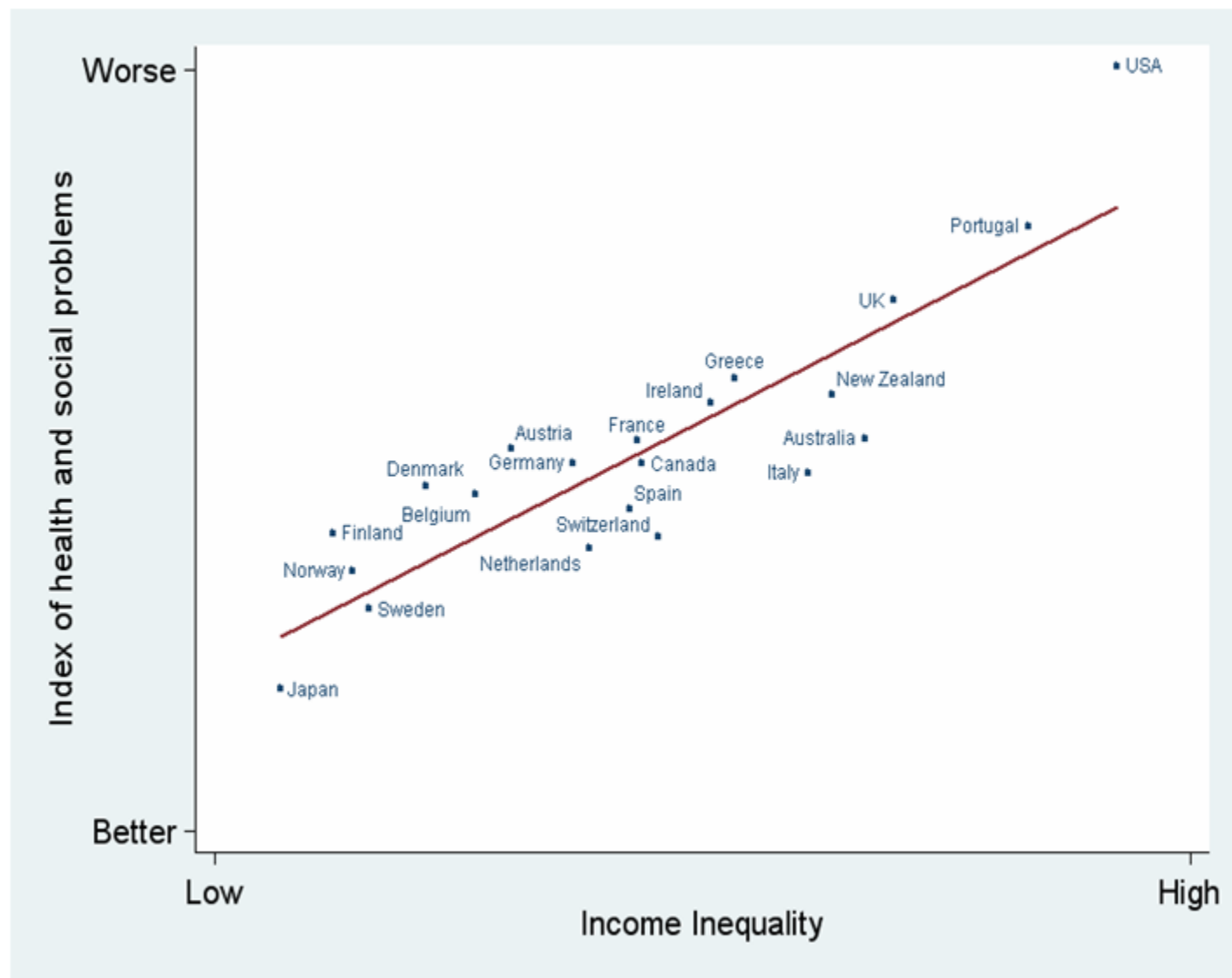
Child-Wellbeing is Unrelated to Average Incomes in Rich Countries



Health and Social Problems are Worse in More Unequal Countries

Index of:

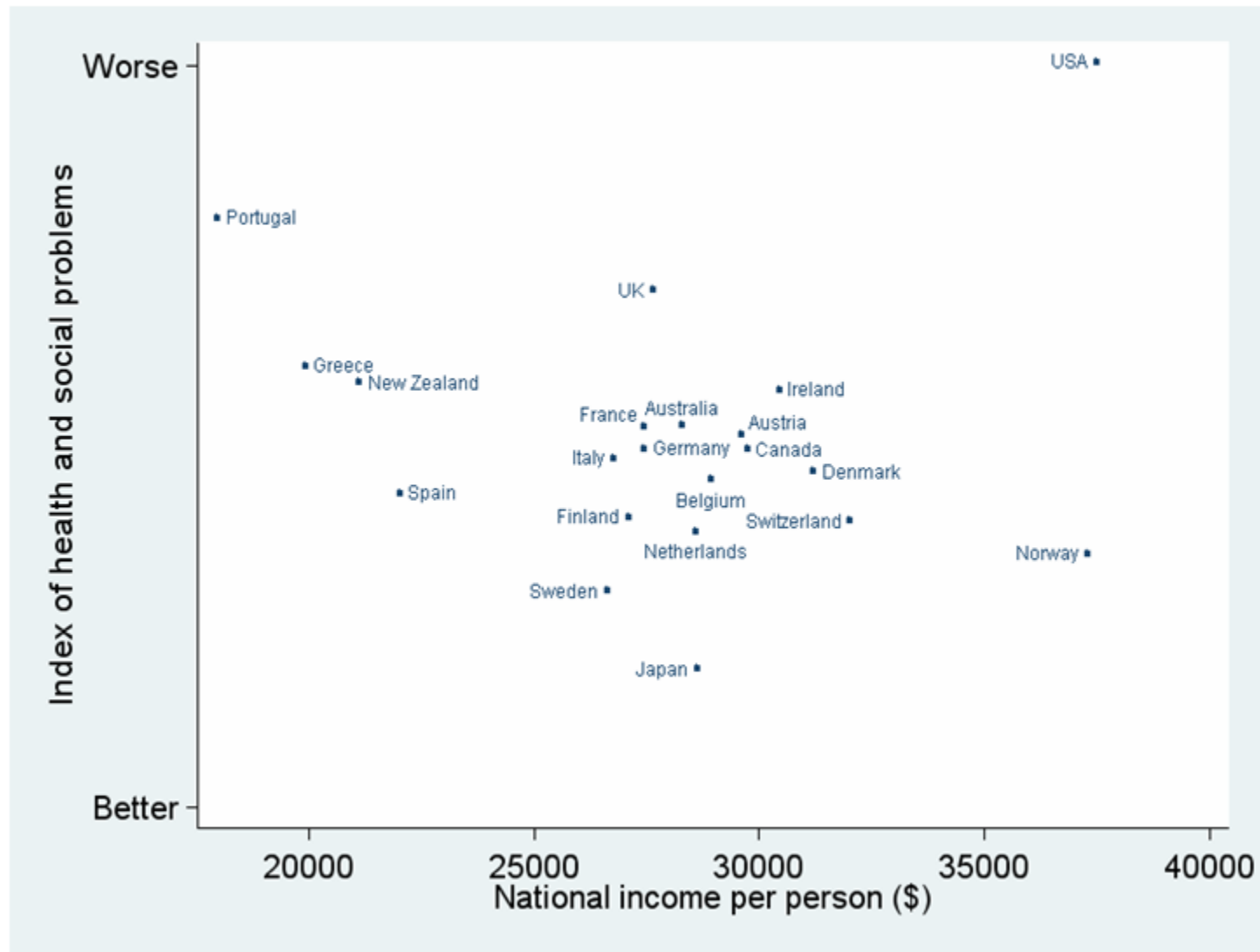
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility



Health and Social Problems are not Related to Average Income in Rich Countries

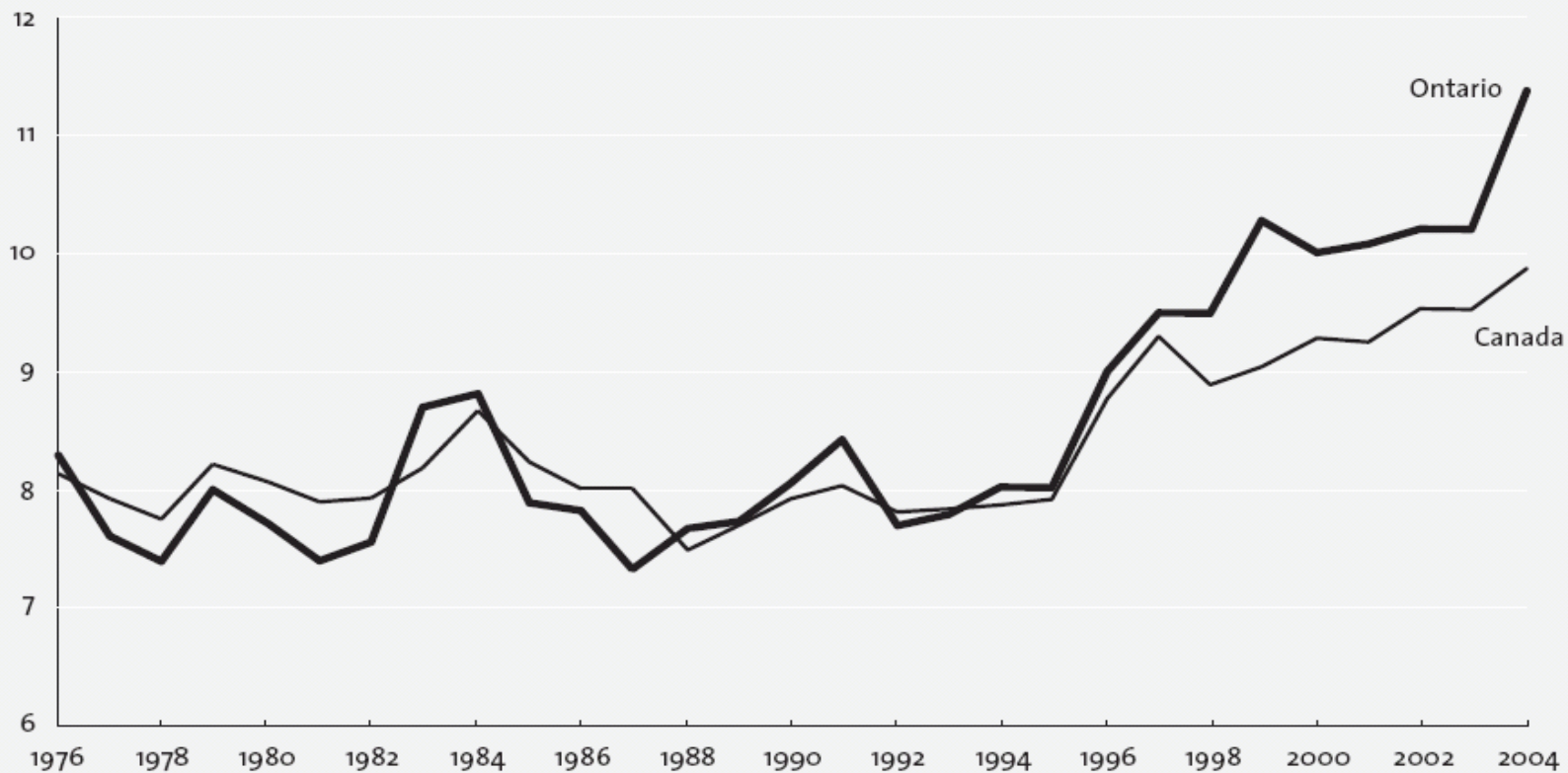
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**CHART 1 The Growing Gap in Canada and Ontario—
Racing into New Territory** The ratio of average after-tax incomes,
top 10% vs. bottom 10% families raising children under 18, 1976–2004



The rich developed societies have reached turning point in human history

Politics should now be about the quality of social relations and how we can develop harmonious and sustainable societies.