‘I get to learn more stuff’: Children’s Understanding of Wellbeing at School in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

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This purpose of this study was to explore how school-aged children understand dimensions of wellbeing in a Canadian context in participation of the Multi-national Qualitative Study – Children’s Understanding of Wellbeing. Twenty-one school-aged children (boys = 8, girls = 13) participated in semi-instructed interviews facilitated by tactile, task-oriented interview tool. Participants were recruited from seven before- and-after-school child-care programs throughout the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The wellbeing of children at school was influenced by the quality of the relationships they had with their teachers. Children recognized teachers as being essential agents in their learning process and teaching them essential skills for their future. Children who described feeling positive about school were children who felt that their teachers were supportive, provided creative ways to learn, and listened to their ideas and concerns. Conversely, children who described negative feelings about school discussed experiencing teachers who did not value their ideas and concerns, and were not supportive in their individual needs as a learner. The teaching style of teachers affect children’s wellbeing at school. Teachers who promote wellbeing at school and positive feeling associated with learning are those who consider the voices and needs of their students, as well as make efforts to incorporate those considerations in their curriculum.

Keywords: wellbeing, student-teacher relationship, children’s perceptions, middle school