



OUR WORK ON CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

We aim to help every child reach their full potential by making learning an engaging and stimulating experience.

Unlocking potential

The Government of China has prioritized basic education in its development agenda providing nine years of free and compulsory primary and junior secondary level education for all children.

China has achieved near universal net enrolment of children aged 6-14 years. Yet, not all children in school are learning as they could be. The most disadvantaged children, particularly children from rural areas, migrant children, ethnic groups and poor urban children, are missing out on a quality education that would equip them with essential learning and development skills.

Schools in the poorest areas lack the resources which enable children to learn and reach their full potential. Teachers require additional support to improve their teaching methods so they can equip students with the skills required in a rapidly changing society.

Our programme

UNICEF promotes a holistic approach to education through its Child-Friendly Schools model in China.

The core principle underpinning our Child-Friendly Schools approach is to make school a nurturing and stimulating experience for every child.

Through our model we aim to:

- Create an inclusive, safe, healthy and protective learning environment for all school-aged children,
- Enhance teaching and learning quality,
- Promote the participation of students, teachers, families and local community in the life of the school, and
- Strengthen and influence education policy to create a more equitable and child friendly education system.

Transforming the classroom

Launched by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF in 2001, the Child-Friendly Schools model has been refined and expanded over the years based on experience of what works.

Participating schools follow a model that includes an emphasis on social and emotional learning to encourage good mental health, along with access to interactive teaching to promote better learning, sports, and education on climate change and disaster risk reduction. Schools ensure access to drinking water and toilet facilities, and encourage children to follow good hygiene practices. The approach seeks to strengthen school management and schools' engagement with parents and the local communities.

Social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a new concept in China and is benefitting 290,000 students and 18,000 teachers across 525 schools. Education administrators, local trainers, school leaders and teachers have been trained in children's rights, child-friendly schools principles and SEL. A school-based SEL curriculum is being rolled out in pilot schools and a family resource package is underway.

Professional development for teachers

We are helping to equip teachers to step up their teaching through professional development. A mobile Education and Training Unit is providing onsite training for 7,600 teachers. This approach has been incorporated in the 2015-2020 Rural Teachers Support Plan to impact 3.3 million rural teachers. We are working to improve teachers' skills and confidence in ICT, sports and games coaching, especially football.

System-wide change

Through our partnership with the Ministry of Education, elements of the Child-Friendly Schools model have informed the national Compulsory School Management Standards with the potential to extend the programme's benefits to all primary and junior secondary school-aged children in China.

An on-going impact study will help determine the extent to which child-friendly schools have improved children's learning and development.

“The Child-Friendly Schools programme has really helped. It is a pioneering concept where there is a special emphasis on the psychological wellbeing of children.”

Wang Yuan
UNICEF Special Advocate for Children

“Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and young people... acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills to recognise and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate care and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively.”

Durlak et al., The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions, Child Development, 2011.

