

Cover sheet

For this assessment I have submitted the following:

Component 1: Presentation

Component 2: presentation script

Component 3: poster

Statement on the use of AI:

I have asked specific questions to AI to help summarise articles and find relevant sources

Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyles in Early Childhood Education

Health, wellbeing and lifestyle are closely related concepts that play a big role in influencing children's development. Experiences during early childhood can shape physical, emotional and social outcomes throughout life. Positive relationships, healthy surroundings and a supportive care system can help children feel secure. And it can also push childrens to naturally develop confidence and achieve their maximum potential (Mollborn et al. 2014) .

Key Points

- Healthy lifestyles promote positive health outcomes.
- Good health contributes to emotional wellbeing.
- Wellbeing influences behaviour, learning and development.
- Social and environmental factors can impact all three areas.

(D Farhud 2015)

Features of Health

Physically?

- A healthy diet
- Exercise/physical activity
- Adequate sleep
- Personal hygiene

Mentally?

- Emotional wellbeing
- Self confidence
- Resilience
- Ability to cope with challenges

Socially?

- Positive relationships
- Family support
- Sense of belonging
- Community involvement

(WHO 2024)

Bowlby's Attachment Theory

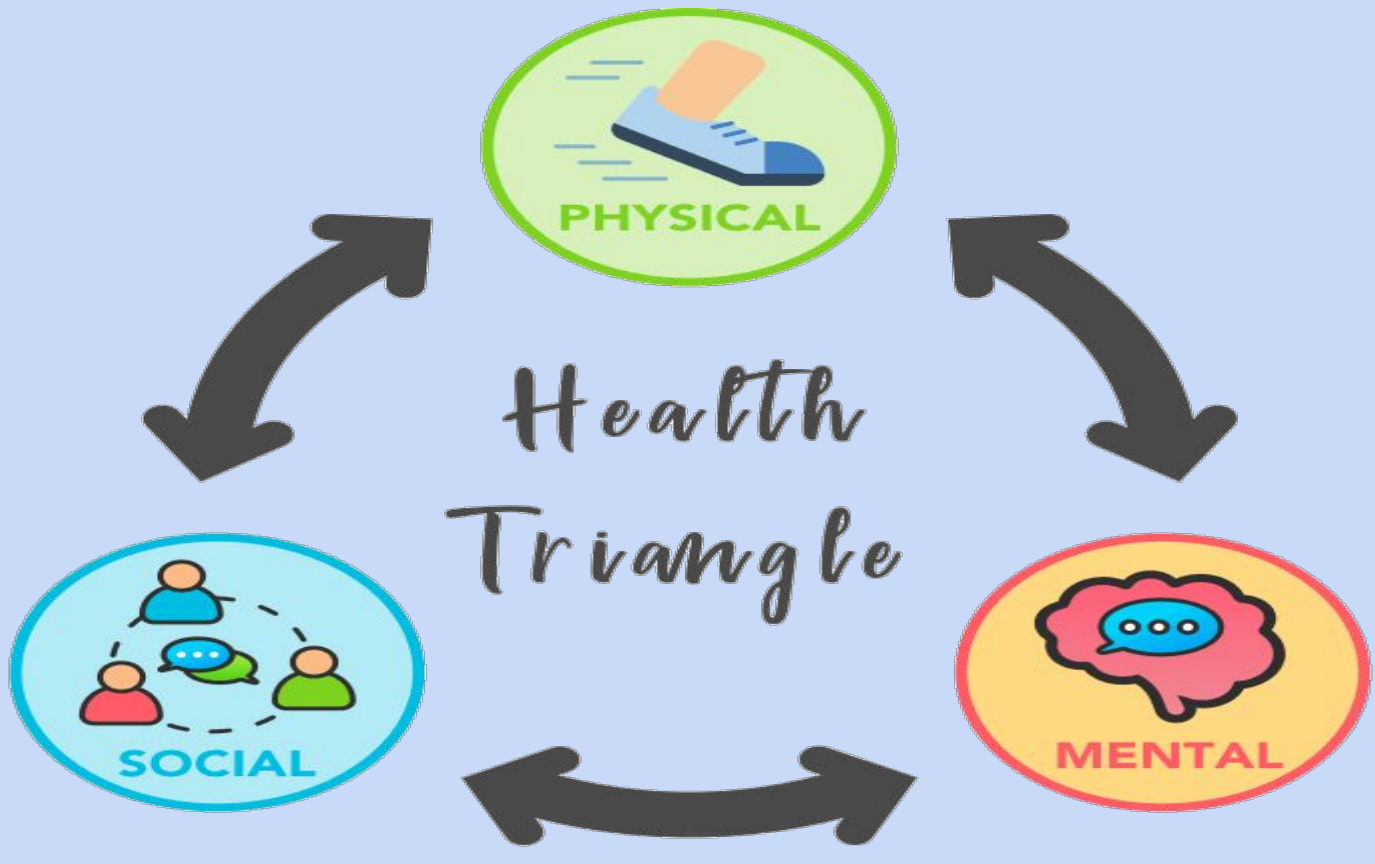
John Bowlby's Attachment Theory highlights the importance of secure relationships between children and their caregivers.

Bowlby argued that children who develop secure attachments are more likely to feel safe, confident and emotionally secure. These early relationships provide a foundation for future social, emotional and cognitive development. (McLeod 2025)

Benefits of Secure Attachment

- Increased confidence
- Greater resilience
- Improved emotional regulation
- Positive relationships with others
- Enhanced wellbeing (Spence et al. 2022)

Children who experience consistent care and emotional support are more likely to develop positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes throughout life (Bowlby, 1969).



Why is Health Important in Early Childhood?

The foundation for children's growth and knowledge all stems from overall good health. What a child experiences during their early years will have a long term impact on their future health and wellbeing (Marmot et al., 2012).

Children with positive health are likely to:

- Form positive relationships
- Develop resilience
- Successfully engage in learning
- Have improved wellbeing

Research tells us that to provide the best opportunities for a healthy upbringing and development, a nurturing and supportive environment is required. (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2022).

The Importance of Positive Relationships

Positive relationships are recognised as a key factor in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Children who experience warm and nurture heavy relationships are more likely to be confident in their way of thinking, and excel in their environment (Musgrave, 2017).

A child's relationship with their parents, carers and practitioners provide emotional support and help them develop much further, especially in terms of important aspects like social and emotional skills. Positive interactions encourage communication, emotional regulation, resilience and confidence in themselves. On the other side of things, poor relationships can negatively affect children's behaviour and overall wellbeing, as well as their confidence levels.

According to Berlinski and Schady (2015), positive relationships during early childhood are the key to creating the foundations for future learning and development. Children who feel safe and supported are more open to explore, take part in new experiences and engage in learning opportunities. Which massively helps them develop in turn.

Practitioners should aim to develop trusting relationships with children and families. By creating an environment where children feel respected, listened to and supported, it would help significantly increase positive health and wellbeing. This can be achieved within an early years setting.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner looked child development using a series of interconnected environmental systems (Elliott and Davis, 2020).

Key Influences on Development

Microsystem

- Family
- School
- Friends

Mesosystem

- Relationships between home and school

Exosystem

- Parents' employment
- Community services

Macrosystem

- Culture
- Government policies
- Social values (Guy-Evans 2025)

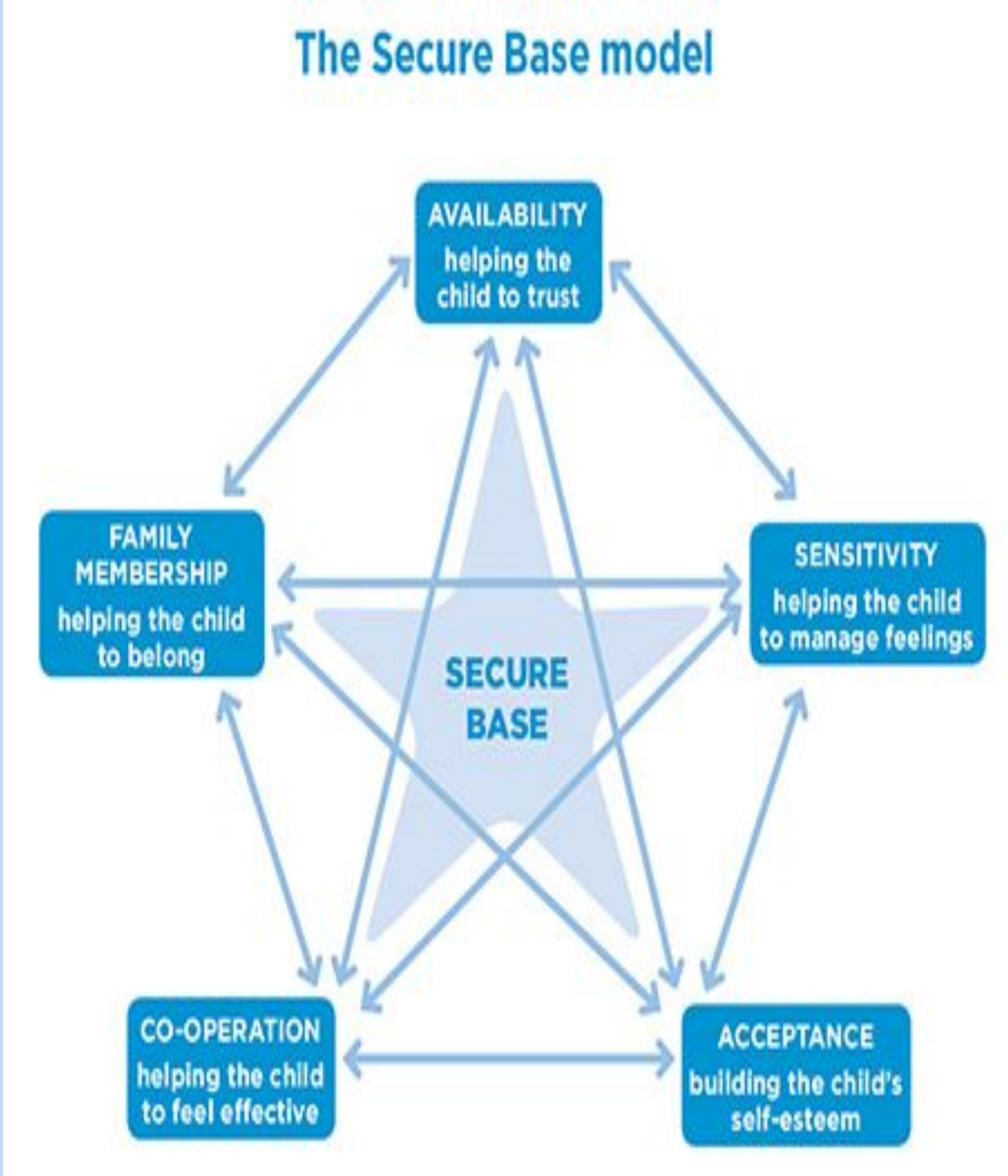
An early years practitioner would play an important role in supporting a child’s wellbeing, they would be promoting a healthy lifestyle and positively impact children's holistic development, this can be achieved through creating a nurturing environment and encouraging healthy habits (Skouteris et al. 2022) .

What is Health?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as:

"A state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease."

This definition from WHO recognises that health is not just physical illness, but includes the emotional wellbeing of an individual and their social relationships (Martino 2018).



Social Determinants of Health

A large range of social, economic and environmental factors play a role in influencing children's health. These influences are described as the social driving component of health. These include social support, education, housing and income, and access to services. (Wilkinson and Marmot 2003).

Young children who experience poorer health, are likely to have grown up in disadvantaged circumstances, with outcomes such as financial difficulty, limited access to healthy food, and increased family stress. All of these can affect a child's well being negatively, both mentally and physically. (Francis et al. 2018)

WELLBEING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing refers to a state in which an individual feels healthy, happy, safe and able to maintain a normal everyday life without major setbacks. Musgrave (2017) describes it as being comfortable. It is a holistic area of concepts, which include physical, social and psychological factors. He says it is primarily about keeping a healthy lifestyle and being satisfied with life in general.

The Welsh Government (2022) defines well being as an achievement and how one maintains physical fitness and how stable they are mentally. Positive wellbeing is very important since it supports healthy development, learning and future life outcomes within young children

On the other side of the coin, unlike physical health, wellbeing is often subjective and will differ in meanings and definitions to different people. A child who feels safe, valued and supported is more likely to experience positive wellbeing and achieve stronger developmental potential.

Dimensions of Well being

Wellbeing consists of many interconnected topics for discussion.

Physical Well being

- Healthy eating
- Regular physical activity
- Quality sleep
- Good physical health

Emotional Wellbeing

- Managing emotions effectively
- Feeling secure and confident
- Developing resilience
- Positive self-esteem

Social Well being

- Building positive relationships
- Sense of belonging
- Effective communication skills

Intellectual Well being

- Curiosity and learning
- Problem-solving skills
- Creativity and exploration

Psychological Well Being

- Coping with challenges
- Independence
- Positive mental health

When all of these areas are supported, children are more likely to thrive and develop.

(Ashdown and Bernard, 2012).

Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well Being

Research tells us that wellbeing can be understood through two entirely different perspectives.

Hedonic Well Being

This focuses on the happiness levels of the child, mainly pleasure and enjoyment. It refers to emotions that indicate positivity, usually experiences while participating in enjoyable activities

Examples include:

- Playing with friends
- Partaking in their favourite activities
- The feeling of happiness and relaxation (Ryan and Deci 2001)

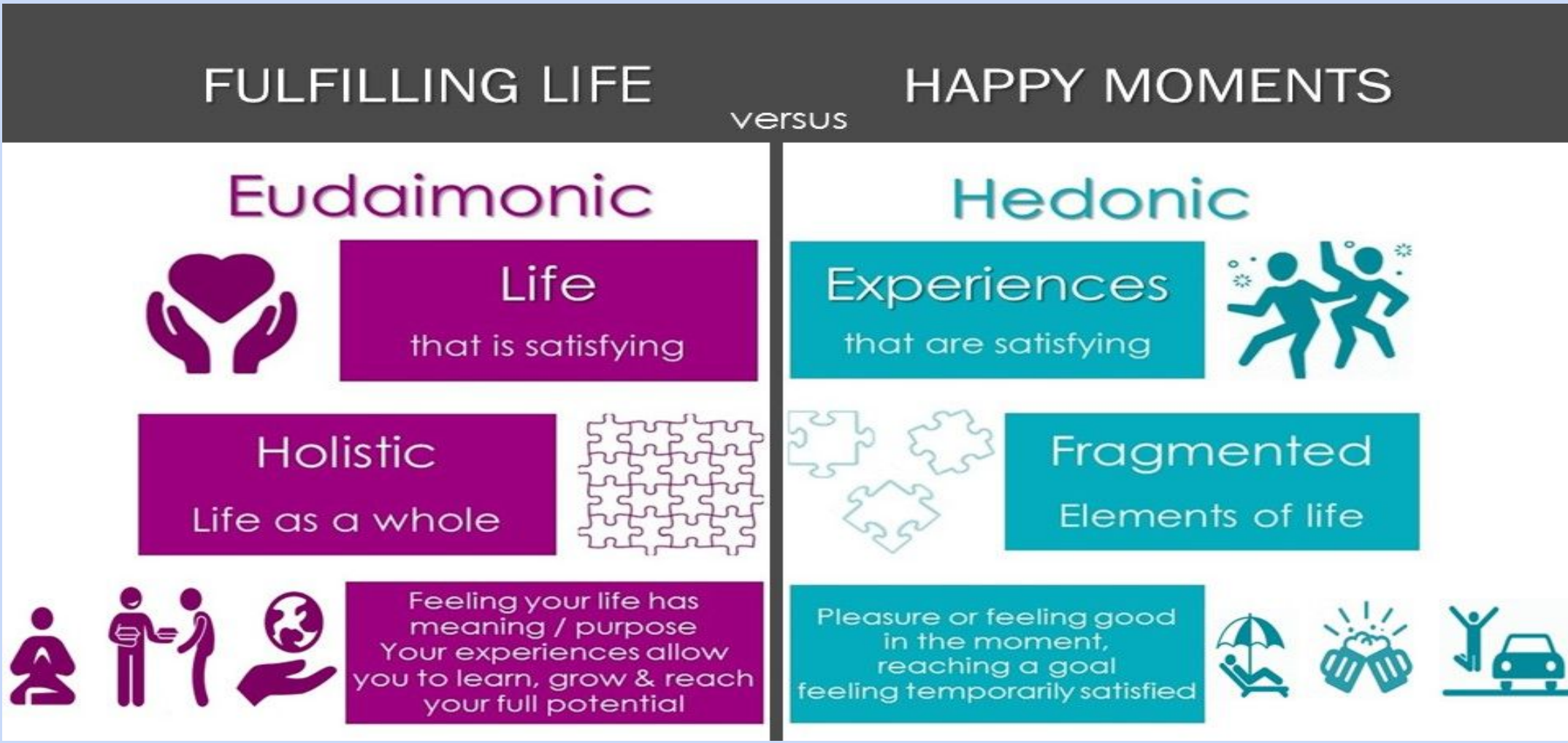
Eudaimonic Well Being

This perspective of wellbeing is about the personal growth of an individual. This is achieved when people develop their abilities and contribute towards positive experiences with others. (Vittersø, 2016).

Examples include:

- Helping others
- Achieving personal goals
- Learning new skills

Research tells us that both forms of wellbeing are highly important to a child's development and their quality of life. (Disabato et al., 2016).



The Importance of Emotional Wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing is a significant part of a child's general development. Resilience, confidence and healthy coping strategies can be achieved easily from children with positive emotional wellbeing

According to Bradshaw (2016), emotional wellbeing helps children to feel more comfortable within themselves and the environment they are in. Positive emotional wellbeing helps to the contribution of improved behaviour, stronger relationships and greater engagement in learning.

The NHS (2021) suggests that children who experience positive wellbeing often demonstrate higher self-esteem, greater concentration and better social skills. Offering better emotional wellbeing during childhood which can furthermore have lasting benefits throughout adulthood.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

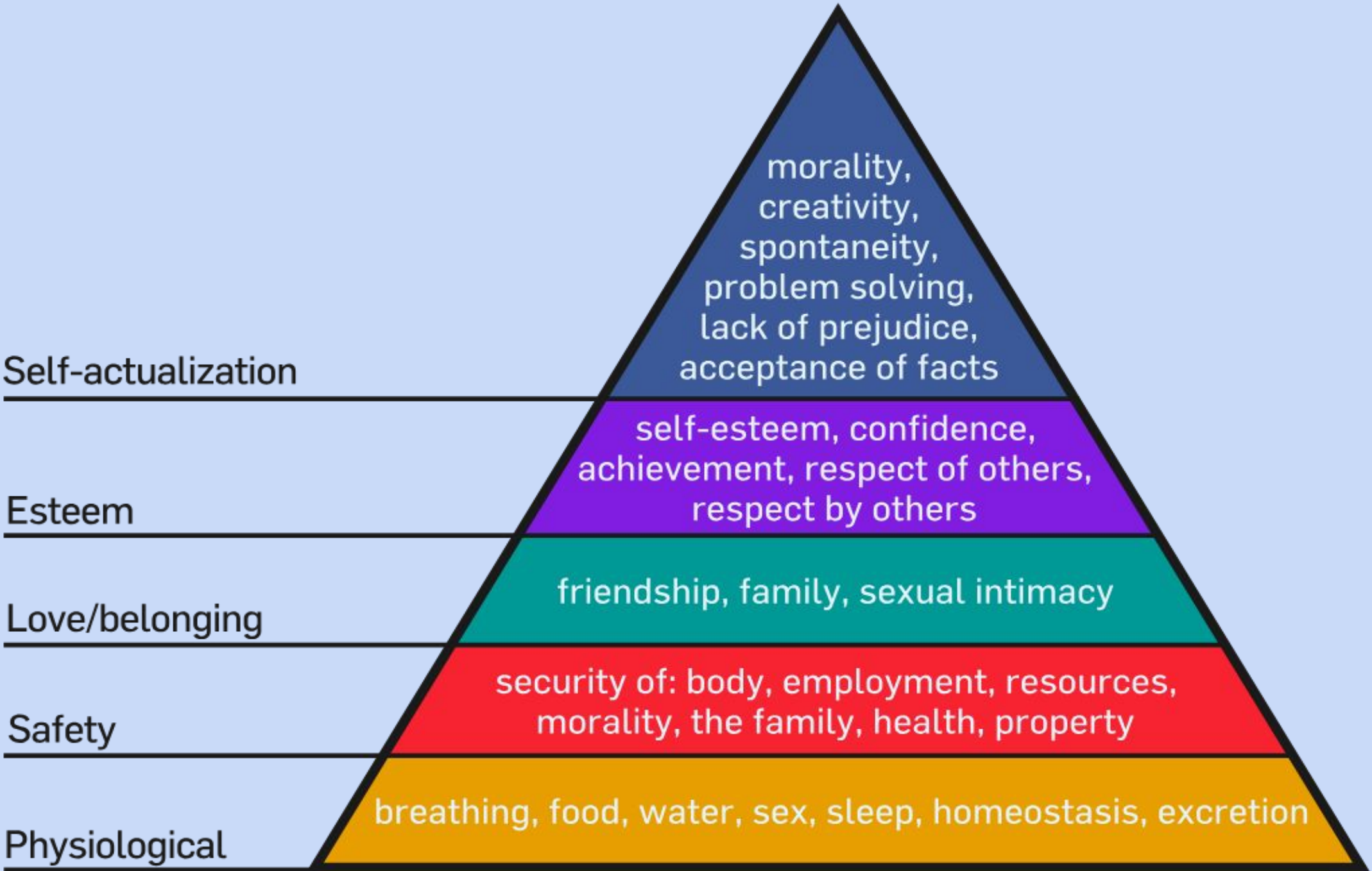
Abraham Maslow proposed that individuals have a hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied in order to achieve wellbeing and personal growth.

The hierarchy consists of:

- Physiological Needs
 - Food
 - Water
 - Sleep
- Safety Needs
 - Security
 - Protection
 - Stability
- Love and Belonging
 - Relationships
 - Friendships
 - Family support
- Esteem Needs
 - Confidence
 - Achievement
 - Respect
- Self-Actualisation
 - Reaching full potential
 - Personal growth

(Cherry 2024)

Maslow's argument consists of lower level needs being more important to first meet, before higher level needs should be considered and achieved (McLeod, 2018). Early years practitioners can ensure children's basic needs are met in an early years setting, since it is an important role of theirs to ensure a positive wellbeing and learning and development.



Benefits of Play

- Develop creativity and imagination
- Improve problem-solving skills
- Build confidence and independence
- Support physical health and development
- Strengthen social and communication skills

Research suggests that play is essential to supporting wellbeing and development (Musgrave, 2017)

Benefits of Mindfulness Activities

- Nature walks
- Breathing exercises
- Colouring activities
- Quiet reflection

These activities may help children to:

- Regulate emotions
- Reduce stress and anxiety

Mindfulness activities positively influence children's wellbeing and health both emotionally and mentally.

(Djernis et al. 2019)

LIFESTYLES AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

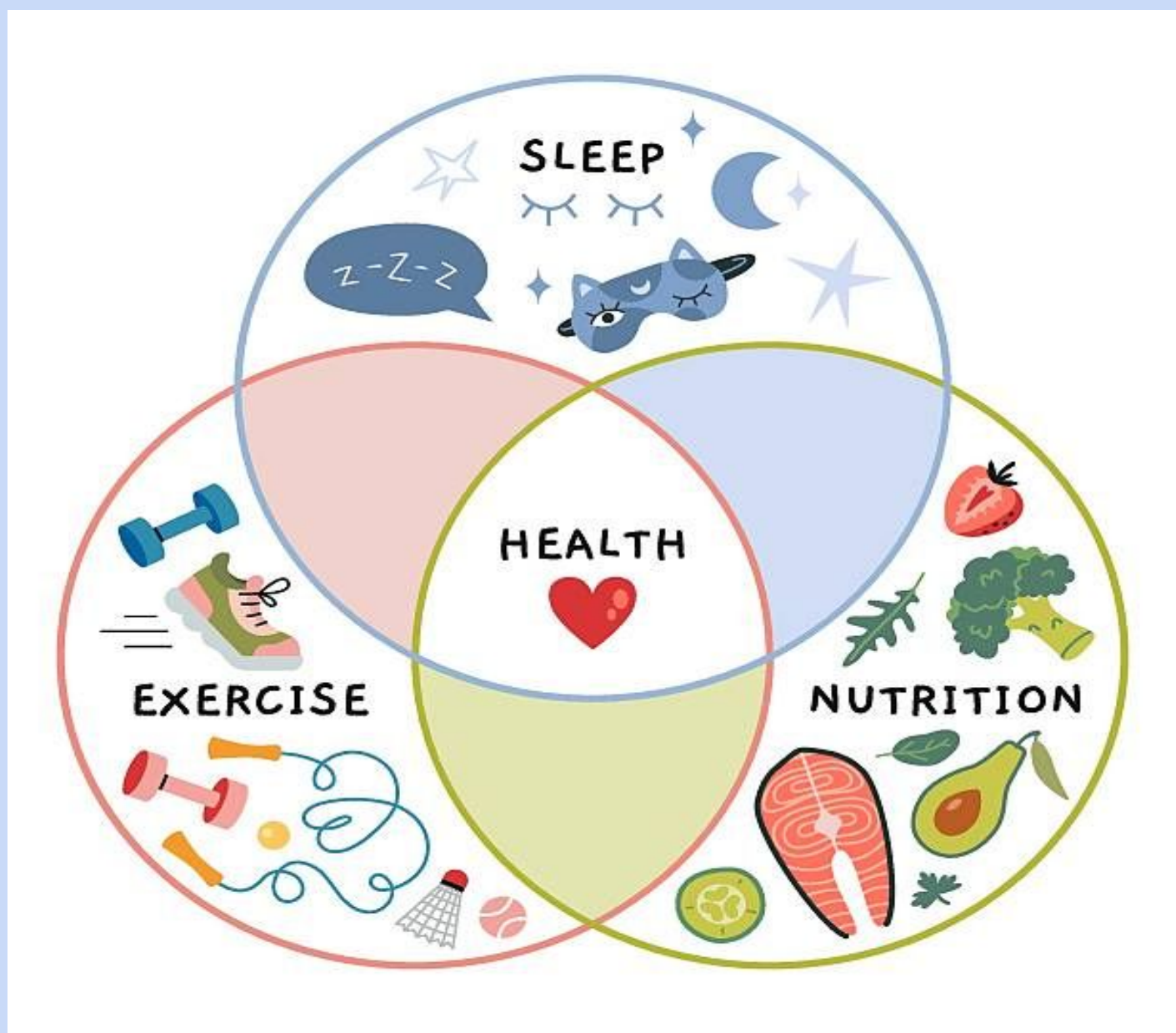
What is Lifestyle?

The word lifestyle refers to the type of life an individual lives, and what they do in their daily lives with the choices surrounding it making an influence. Parents and carers heavily influence and determine the what level of lifestyle of young children become established in, along with the type of environment they are raised within. (Lekše et al. 2023)

Children's lifestyles are influenced by the following factors:

- Diet and nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep patterns
- Environment at home
- Family relationships
- Income and financial
- Community & culture (Maia et al. 2025)

A person who grew up with healthy lifestyle habits during the childhood likely experienced the influence of positive physical health and mental wellbeing. (Marques et al., 2019)



Healthy Lifestyles and Child Development

Making healthy choices like eating well, staying active, getting enough rest, and connecting with others leads to children being able to thrive. Research shows that these everyday habits are the main building blocks for a child's overall wellbeing and healthy development. (Skouteris et al. 2022)

Benefits of a healthy lifestyle include:

- Improved physical health
- Better emotional wellbeing
- Increased concentration and learning
- Enhanced self esteem
- Reduced risk of illness

(World Health Organization 2024)

In contrast, unhealthy lifestyle habits may negatively affect children's health and wellbeing, as well as how they behave



The Role of the Practitioner

Professionals in Early years education, such as practitioners play a big role in pushing for healthier children, in terms of wellbeing and lifestyle. They can create a supportive environment to encourage healthy and positive habits for a preferable development (Skouteris et al. 2022).

Practitioners can:

- Promote healthy eating and proper nutrition
- Encourage physical activity/outdoor play
- Support emotional wellbeing of children
- Develop positive relationships with children and families
- Identify additional support needs
- Work collaboratively with parents and other professionals (Williams et al. 2022)

Barnardo’s (2022) highlight the importance of ensuring children and families get appropriate support and are able to achieve positive outcomes.

Curriculum for Wales and Legislation

Health and wellbeing are at the centre of children's development and their learning paths. This is backed by the Curriculum for Wales. The health and wellbeing area of learning and experience help support learners become:

- Healthy individuals
- Confident and capable learners
- Ethical and informed people
- Ambitious people ready to contribute to society

(Welsh Government, 2021)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) also support children's rights to their health and development. (UNICEF, 2021). Especially multi agency work.

These promote positive health and wellbeing within the younger developing years, which can be used as guidelines by practitioners.

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