

Link to Poverty Sway - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/p4aY9DVBXGjBGWNZ?ref=Link>

Link to Unhealthy Eating Sway - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/rP7jDy5BAKx4OxGH?ref=Link>

Link to Homeschooling Sway - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/HXrIKFgp7AyetVsS?ref=Link>

Poverty

Poverty is something a lot of people have faced at some point in their lives, especially in more recent times. According to Francis-Devine, (2023) around 1 in 6 people face poverty, meaning it isn't an uncommon issue. However, it is important to consider that children may also face poverty and might have a plethora of issues they can face day to day. I for one, being the only person in my class to have one parent at home who works, and live in a council house, meant I faced issues such as exclusion and being harassed. These issues had a large effect on me and many others throughout childhood, and in today's blog, I would like to dive a little deeper into the effects faced by children in poverty, more specifically, socially.

First of all, what is poverty? According to Trust for London, (2022), "Households are considered to be below the UK poverty line if their income is below 60% of the median household income after housing costs for that year". Essentially, if someone makes £2,000 a month (£24,000 a year) and is the sole breadwinner in their house, if they have less 60% (14,400) left for the year for food, clothes, other bills, etc, they are considered below the poverty line.

Growing up, there are noticeable differences between those above and below the poverty line. According to Treanor, (2012), evidence suggests that children below the poverty line are less likely to thrive socially than those above it. There is a substantial difference between the two. Research concludes that children in poverty face higher social difficulties than those who aren't, although this may be due to external factors, typically the quality of the relationship between parents and children, or due to maternal characteristics such as depression or self-esteem. These can all impact the social development of a child in poverty. In my experience, I found that due to the difference in financial standing between me and my peers, I was excluded. I could not go on many trips, including the typical residential ones, I lived in a different area and I could

not be involved with the trends as much, therefore leaving me out. My peers often would treat me differently or judge me for not having makeup as early as they did, and I often felt as though I had no friends due to this. This led to me shutting myself in and struggling to communicate with my peers, make friends, etc. These issues are ones that I am still affected by today. I struggle to make friends and openly communicate with others and find issue with approaching people on my own accord. I believe that children below the poverty line should not be excluded based on financial status, however it does still happen.

According to The Children's Society, (2018), children from poorer backgrounds do not have the same access to trips out with friends or school trips. This may further distance children and young people from their peers. This is further added to as young people often have to take up part time jobs outside of school / college in order to financially support the household, further reducing their time for themselves or may skip days of school in order to go to work. This means that their social lives are highly impacted, as they have the responsibility of supporting their parents financially and ensuring that the household is able to stay afloat. This responsibility can affect children's mental health, as they may become anxious and stressed. They may struggle to engage with others outside of necessary communication due to social exhaustion.

According to The Children's Society, (2018), over a quarter of the poorest families said their children were bullied as they were unable to afford the costs that come with school. Not having the appropriate uniform and equipment may lead to children getting in trouble in school and facing punishments such as isolation, or even suspension. However, if the family cannot afford to provide the correct uniform and there is no support, they may be kept in isolation or away from school for extended period of times which can not only affect their education, but further increase the social isolation our children face, which can deprive them of the ability to learn and grow their social skills and relationships and develop as individuals. This can lead to a lack of social skills as a child grows into an adult and create a host of problems for their future.

Overall, I think that the social aspect of poverty is just as important as any other. Yes children are deprived emotionally, and physically in terms of nutrition etc, however it is important to consider the implications of poverty on all aspects of development which most definitely includes social development. Children may struggle with socialisation if they are considered different from their peers, or struggle to support their family outside of school, or even have a lack of the correct supplies and uniform readily available due to a lack of finances and support from the school. It is important that schools recognise where this is occurring and take measures to prevent it from happening. I personally believe that some teachers need educating in this area, as when I was a child I was excluded by one of my teachers as I was the only student in the class of 12 to live in a council house. Because of this I was treated differently, and even as a roughly 9 year old I could see the difference between the way I was treated and the way my peers were treated, and I found it difficult to comprehend and understand. Remember, if you work in childcare, have children or otherwise, it is extremely important to ensure that children are not treated differently based on their economic status.

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Unhealthy eating

It's no secret; healthy eating is extremely important for our health, but also for our children's health. Ensuring a healthy and nutritious diet for our children can keep them eating healthy foods and ensuring they are getting their five a day, plenty of water and eating the correct amount of each food groups, is extremely important for a healthy child. However, on the opposite end of the spectrum is those children who are unable to get the correct necessary nutrition. This can lead to a lot of healthy issues including impaired growth or obesity. Children are still young, impressionable and growing and it is therefore keeping their diet healthy, and nutritional is a must.

Children may eat unhealthily for a variety of reasons. This can be due to parents passing on these unhealthy habits, parents may be unable to afford healthy foods as unhealthy alternatives are often cheaper and may not have the time to cook healthy meals, so frozen food, crisps and chocolates, and other unhealthy options end up being the go-to. Or children just may develop these habits on their own, and One issue for children is obesity. If children are overeating and eating unhealthy foods too often, they can gain an unhealthy amount of weight. According to Goisis, A *et al.*, (2016), Those who are overweight in childhood are far more likely to experience the same in adulthood, therefore leading to poor physical development. The child may be obese or overweight throughout their lives which may lead to a lack of physical activity and ability to exercise, especially if overweight. The child may be more likely to be sedentary rather than active due to their unhealthy lifestyle and may struggle to lose weight further on. Hence the importance of starting healthy eating young!

According to Newson, L. and Abayomi, J. (2024), Living with obesity can affect physical health and quality of life. This impact can develop and follow a child into adulthood and affect them throughout their lifespan. Sahoo K, (2015), says that these issues can include cardiovascular disease, or diabetes. These health conditions can impact quality of life and cause problems as a child gets older. According to NHS, (2022) CVD (cardiovascular disease) is typically associated with damage to arteries in

several of the main organs within the body, and buildup within the arteries. Furthermore, it may cause blood clots. This can affect a child's physical development as they may struggle to exercise due to the symptoms they face and may struggle to practice and develop their gross motor skills if they should experience symptoms that may affect these. Individuals with CVD may experience a stroke, which can heavily disrupt an individual's development. They may have to go through rehabilitation in order to improve the use of their limbs, speech therapy due to struggles with speech, and adapt to the changes with their body after the event. Some people can make a full recovery of course, and it is more likely in older people, however it is not unheard of, and it is important to keep in mind the risks of a seriously unhealthy diet!

I have talked a lot about topics like overeating and eating too much unhealthy food, however that is not the only type of poor nutrition that can come about and cause issues with a child's development. It's also important to consider the opposite end of the spectrum and consider those who are malnourished, eating little amounts if anything, and falling behind their peers. This can start as early as a newborn. According to NHS, (2020) babies can face an issue called a tongue tie which can often affect their ability to latch on when feeding, which can in turn affect their ability to have a sustainable source of nutrients and affect their growth. If untreated, according to Mark, (2020), a tongue tie can have a large impact on a child's gross motor skills later in life. Even skills such as lifting their heads are impeded due to the tightness that can occur from an untreated tongue tie. Tongue Tie, (N/A) discusses more issues, such as sleep deprivation in infants, as well as failure to thrive. Not all babies do have issues with tongue ties, however often they do, and these follow on into childhood. Children with tongue ties have found issue with skills such as chewing solid foods, delays in speech development and often dribbling. Even adults with tongue ties have persistent issues such as migraines, clicking in the jaw and issues with speech. Something so small can impact children for the rest of their lives, and if you're having issues with your baby breastfeeding, it's important to investigate as an option!

Malnutrition can go either way, either undereating and failure to thrive for a number of reasons, over overeating those unhealthy foods often attempted to avoid providing children with. It is unfortunately something that often does happen, and especially obesity seems to be a growing issue a lot of parents face today. Children with stunted growth, issues with gross and fine motor skills and failure to thrive due to malnutrition either way are common and that is massively unfortunate, however it is important to be educated on these issues and understand these issues to ensure that support can be provided and education can be used to reduce the issues faced by these children, and educate them where the healthy area of eating is, between eating too much and too little, healthy and unhealthy, that treats are okay in moderation. It is all important to educate children on to ensure they have healthy development and a fundamental understanding of nutrition and how best to stay in that healthy medium. To educate children, it is first important to educate ourselves.

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Homeschooling

Homeschooling is becoming more popular as the years go on, people giving advice and supporting their child's education at home rather than sending them to public or private schools, which is a debate of its own. However, it is important to consider; How does home schooling affect your child's social development? Typically, children go to school, spend time with their peers, engage in play and activities in class, make friends, etc. This is crucial to a child's development. If you homeschool your child, it can it drastically affect their social lives unless extra measures are taken.

Medlin, (2000) discusses how parents of homeschooled children view homeschooling. They believe it takes a different perspective on schooling and how it can affect children socially. They bring up good points about how schools are structured to encourage conformity and reduce individuality and can affect a child's self esteem negatively. This suppression of individuality can affect a child's personality development, and in turn their social development may be hindered. They may feel as though they have to conform to standards and expectations and may feel as though they are unable to express themselves and find their feet socially. However, they are given the opportunity to socialise 5 days a week with a multitude of other children, which can provide them options socially and help them find the group they get on with best, which is a positive. Especially in secondary school, you meet a lot of new people, with secondary schools typically reaching 1000 kids (at least in my case, mine was both 600 and 1,200 at different times), which can give you a lot of social opportunities.

In Medlin, (2000), a study comparing the social skills of both elementary and homeschooled students in various grades showed that typically,

children who are homeschooled score higher than those who attend public school. The study involved different areas of social skills, and then an overall score is obtained and compared to those of other children to determine which type of schooling is affecting children's social development more. Parents involved in the study on the homeschooled side were more likely to say that their children were more well mannered and well behaved than those in public schools.

However, a second and third study is conducted by other people a few years on, and the overall result says that there is no overall significant difference between homeschooled and public schooled children, and socially they are approximately the same. This shows that the results may change over time. The most recent study conducted by McKinley *et al.*, (2007), showed that there is no noticeable difference between homeschooled and public schooled children. The differences in social skills between the two groups of children. This suggests that overall, or over time, the children who are homeschooled are just as socially developed as those who are in public schools.

Abuzandah, (2020) involves another study in regard to the development of children's social skills within the context of the students themselves, and how they feel about homeschooling in relation to their social development. 67% believe that their results were more positive, and they have well developed social skills, however 33% say otherwise, believing that their experience in being homeschooled has denied them the ability to properly mingle with their peers and develop socially, as those in public schools do. This shows that it may depend on personal experience and how homeschooling is approached. It is important to keep in mind that humans are social, and children need the opportunity to socialise and spend time with others their age in order to fully develop as their own person and learn their own way. Without this opportunity, they may fall into the 33% from the study that feels as though home schooling was not the best option for their social development and that they had a subpar social development due to their homeschooling. I believe that children who are homeschooled need to be involved in an array of activities and

clubs where they are able to interact with other children in order to ensure their development is on track.

Social development is extremely important for our children, as is any other area of development. Homeschooling eliminates one of the main ways children interact with others their age, which is a fact. It calls for replacements to ensure that they are getting just as much social interaction as they would in public school, hence my opinion on allowing homeschooled children to go to clubs with children their own age. It allows them that extra bit of social interaction, especially if they are an only child. If taken out of public school and away from those interactions, it is important that we replace them with something equally as beneficial. Without having that additional interaction their development of social skills may be hindered and they may struggle with communication, morals, manners etc as they have not had much interaction outside of family. This is not always the case, but is important to consider as a possible outcome for homeschooled children. If homeschooling your child is something you are considering, it is important you recognise that your child may be missing out on social experiences that they would have in public school and ensure they are getting out and having enough social interaction with those their own age to replace what they are missing.

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