

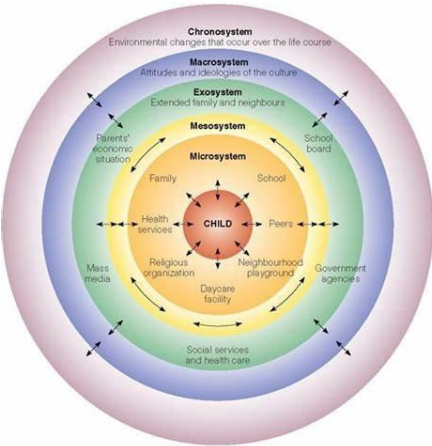
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Introduction: This poster is designed to examine health, wellbeing, and lifestyles and how they impact children and families in the Early Years. Definitions, models, and theories will be considered for each concept and linked to Early Years practice. Many influences affecting children's health and well-being will be explored. To consider the importance of the practitioner's supportive role, encouraging choices that result in good health, well-being, and lifestyles for children and families they support.



(Source: Bing 2024)



(Source: Simply Psychology 2024)

Health: (Sarafino, 2022 p.31) states we use the term health to mean a positive state of physical, mental, and social well-being—not simply the absence of injury or disease. However, Collins Dictionary (2023) defines health as “a state in which a person is not suffering from any illness and is feeling well”. Furthermore, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2023) states that health does not only include the absence of illness or disease but the state of complete mental, physical, and social well-being it considers the importance of a child’s health and impact on child development, including the people and community surrounding the child playing an active part in their healthy development (Coles and Cheyne and Daniel, 2013) child health and wellbeing are influenced by several incorporating elements—physical, social, behavioural, environmental, and psychological all of which can affect early childhood development and the acquisition of vital social, emotional, physical, and cognitive language skills. Adverse early life experiences can have lifelong effects, having negative consequences for the health and well-being of a child. According to (Musgrave, 2017, p.36) the most influential policy was Every Child Matters (ECM) Green Paper (HM Government 2003). The objectives of ECM were to focus on an integrated and holistic approach of working with children and families and set significant changes for the planning and delivery of health in children’s services. The outcomes echoed the Rights of the child. It includes five outcomes that the government intends to achieve for children in relation to health: every child should be healthy. WHO (2023) emphasised that all governments are responsible for their citizens’ health, which can only be fulfilled by providing adequate health and social measures. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) highlights in article 24 that every child has the right to the best possible health, which states that the government must provide good quality healthcare, clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment, and sound education so children can stay healthy (UNICEF, 2023). The Healthy Child Wales Programme (HCWP) is a universal health programme in Wales available to all families with children aged 0-7 years providing advice and guidance to support parenting and healthy lifestyle choices, alongside preventative and early intervention measures. According to (Underdown, 2007, p.35) It is fundamental that foundations for emotional and social well-being are introduced from birth. Infants seek interaction with others and constantly react and respond to their changing environments. It is acknowledged that from birth critical processes begin, children are making emotional attachments and form first relationships. Infants need opportunities to adapt to others, learn to regulate or control their emotions, and attach to main carers who in turn can respond to them. These factors have a significant impact in the future of mental health development (Bowlby 1969, 1988; Sroufe 1995; Steele et al. 1996; Stern 1998a; Fonagy et al. 2004). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory considers the child is at the centre of a model with different elements and relationships surrounding them, these will have some impact on that child’s health and development (Underdown, 2007).

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Well-being: “The concept of well-being is multi-dimensional, encompassing physical, emotional and social well-being and focusing on children’s immediate as well as their future lives” (Statham and Chase 2010). Mind (2020) states that there is not a specific definition for mental wellbeing, and it does not indicate that a person with good mental wellbeing is always happy. WHO (2021) describe two distinctive types of well-being, hedonic view considers a feel-good factor which can be seen as a pleasant individual experience. A eudemonic view considers the individual’s ability to act in line with their sense of meaning and purpose encouraging happiness. The Well-being of Future Generations Act Wales (2015) was implemented to improve social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being. It focuses on public bodies in Wales assessing the long-term impact of strategies to work well with people, communities, and others, to prevent poverty, health inequalities, and climate change. The Act is distinctive to Wales attracting attention from countries worldwide as it offers a vast opportunity to make an enduring, positive change to current and future generations.

(Berlinski and Schady, 2015) emphasise, family is one of the most essential factors that determines a child’s well-being. Within in the family home where children are raised can be a happy, warm, nurturing space. However, it can be a cold, neglected space where rejection can occur. Talking, interacting during play, reading and singing songs to a child will naturally stimulate them. As a parent, making these choices will have a profound and long-lasting effect on the child’s development. In addition, receiving stable interactions and regular stimulation enhances the development of language and cognitive skills. (Mainstone-Cotton, 2017, p.109) agrees with this, and believes that talking between a newborn baby and a caregiver is an important process. By talking, waiting for the baby to respond, whilst making eye contact are essential skills to build the infants well-being and strengthens attachment.

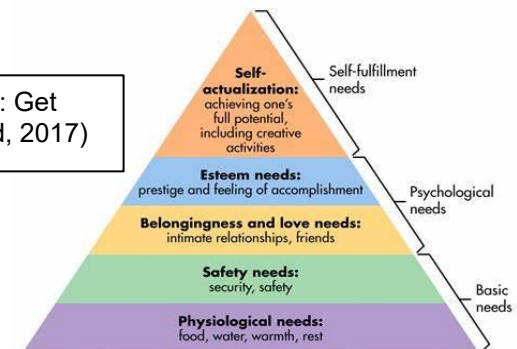
A study completed by Hong, Ra and Jang (2015) focussed on 274 children aged 3-5 years old, researching how do young children perceive the meaning of happiness and when do children feel happy. Hong, Ra and Jang (2015) revealed that children understand happiness from a personal perspective. The children were unable to define the meaning of happiness and referred to happy experiences that included attention, love, and support from people around them. They also included descriptions of favourite places, toys and significant people within their lives. Memories of feeling safe, secure, and happy in which basic needs are met. Notably, this links to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs that we require our basic needs to be met, those of food and warmth, and physical safety, before we can value love and care. providing nurture they need, along with the opportunities for exploration, interaction, and play (Robinson, 2014 p.79).

Roberts (2010) completed a six-year research project concerning children’s well-being and developed an ABC holistic model that reflects the whole child. Comparable principles to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs pyramid, which include essential physical needs being met, attachment, gaining a sense of oneself, and finding a sense of identity.

(Source:
Blossom and
Berry, 2010)



(Source: Get
psyched, 2017)



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Article 27 of the UNCRC states that every child has the right to a good standard of living (UNICEF, 2023). Furthermore, Musgrave (2017) states Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda in Wales followed the aims of the UNCRC right to health. One of the outcomes was that children should benefit from 'being healthy, enjoying good physical and mental health, and living a healthy lifestyle. (Barnardo's, 2016) state for children's mental and physical health starts in the home, at school, within the neighbourhood and local community. A significant impact is made by physical environments and social circumstances in which children are born and brought up. Roberts (2010) highlights the importance of family life and relationships concerning a child's happiness and wellbeing. Considering the influences that early experiences and relationships have on children's brain development. Rees and Main (2016) found that children living within a negative family environment have lower wellbeing than children in a positive family environment. This is due to not experiencing positive interactions or relationships negatively affecting wellbeing. Elliot (No Date) states Bowlby believed babies form a strong bond with their primary carers. If this is broken, it can cause distress and long-term psychological damage. Bowlby emphasized that children who experience emotional difficulties in the early years often suffer psychological, behavioural, and mental difficulties in later life Elliot (no date). Furthermore, it gives the ability to categorise attachment behaviours help us understand the optimal solution to problem parenting and has enabled us to improve childcare and parenting strategies Elliot (no date). However, Keller (2021) argues that the attachment theory is weak due to vague concepts and descriptive processes.

Dahlgren and Whitehead (2021) compiled a model called the rainbow model that stimulated people to contemplate a variety of objectives that affect a person's health not just within the health services. It is considered many lifestyle situations such as living conditions, social network, education that affect a person's healthy development. Recently the cost-of-living crisis has affected a significant number of young children and their families. UNICEF (no date) states that the quality of young children's early experiences make positive differences to wellbeing. health and behaviour throughout life. The Marmot Review looks to improving health for everyone by reducing inequalities and providing more thorough action within society. Child poverty has increased considerably and families living in poverty are more likely to suffer from poor health and mental health problems. Lifetime consequences for children living in poverty are poor as they do not always have access to nutritional meals and a warm comfortable home, sometimes living with parents that suffer pressures due to poor income and money-related issues Mamot *et al.* (2020). Coles, Cheyne and Daniel (2013) suggest the importance of seeking good habits and taking a positive approach to thinking, but this is not always achievable if there are ongoing mental health problems. Mind (2022) state the importance of listening to the experiences of people whose mental health is most at risk. Such as young people, individuals from racialised communities and families facing poverty. Mind (2022) emphasise that the COVID pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis has left families struggling. Additionally, Mind (2022,2023, p. 3-8) annual report and accounts: *Within listening to real experiences, creating real impact*. State that the mental health system is denying too many people the support they need. Mind offer services to support people whose mental health is most at risk, making sure they are listened to and able to shape any decision that affects their lives.

According to UNICEF (no date) millions of children are not getting the nutrition or health care they need, growing up exposed to violence, extreme stress and air pollution They are deprived of the stimulation that their developing brains need to thrive and miss out on opportunities. (Public Health Wales, 2015) children can suffer Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) traumatic events that can significantly affect health and wellbeing. These events can impact a child's development such as suffering abuse, living with domestic violence, separation of parents, drug and alcohol misuse within in the family home. Children who have suffered ACEs are more likely to experience, social problems and may turn to crime or violence, suffer mental health problems (Public Health Wales, 2015).



(Source: Google images 2018)

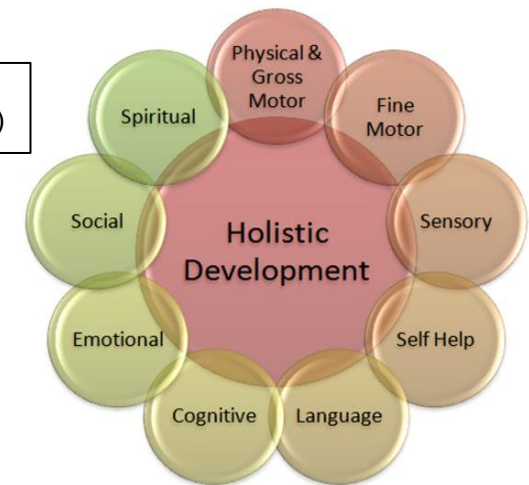
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Lifestyles-According to Welsh Government (2023), the new curriculum for Wales is intended to promote the health and wellbeing of young children, with the aim of encouraging healthy, confident individuals who are ambitious and capable learners. The quality of children's early experiences will make a profound difference to their health, wellbeing and holistic development (UNICEF, no date). Musgrave (2017) points out that skilled practitioners need to be equipped to play their role in supporting children's health and well-being, as well as knowing the historical conditions of children's health and lifestyle to support them successfully. Marmot, *et al.* (2020) believes a good paid, highly trained childcare team is paramount to fully support young children and their families. However, highlights childcare workers are usually on low salaries and within settings experience difficulties maintaining and recruiting staff. Welsh Government (2018) state that childcare practitioners and settings are in an ideal situation to promote, encourage and develop children's eating habits. Trying a variety of healthy nutritional foods can help to establish lifelong eating habits. PACEY (2016) has reported that childcare professionals have reported seeing signs that children in their care between the ages of three and five years are unhappy about how they look or feel about their body. Pressure on children comes from all kinds of sources, such as social media and role models. Adults have a significant role in facilitating children to understand and interpret messages about body image, appearance, and size. Our understanding of the language we use with children about subjects like people's appearance, weight, skin colour, or clothes are significant areas to reflect on when spending time with children, especially as an early year's professional. According to (Mainstone-Cotton 2017, p.17) an important part of increasing children's wellbeing is having supportive people around them, who believe in them and give encouragement. The practitioner's role is so important in supporting children to facilitate these needs.

Conclusion- There is considerable evidence within this poster that health, wellbeing, and lifestyles are interconnecting and impact one another. It also emphasises the importance of engagement in positive and nurturing relationships for children to develop healthy. The poster relates to the impact of health, well-being, and lifestyles on children's holistic development, and the significance of early life experiences that enhance well-being and development that will continue into adulthood.

(Source: Google images (no date)



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