

Health, wellbeing and Lifestyle Concepts

Introduction

Throughout this poster the subjects of health, well-being, and lifestyles will be examined and defined along with the relevance of these concepts for young children. Furthermore, the role of the practitioner in early childhood practice will also be covered, along with multiple ideas for how they might promote young children's lifestyles, health, and well-being in order to encourage their holistic development.



(Watkins. S, 2000)

Health, wellbeing and lifestyle are found to be similar in many different aspects. According to BBC, (2024).. a healthy lifestyle is made up of decisions and practices which promote mental and social interactions and physical well-being. To ensure all these are met, children and adolescents must look after themselves mentally as well as physically for example, they must have a sufficient amount of sleep, a nutritional diet and regular physical activities (BBC, 2024).

Firstly, there are many different aspects of health, for example, “mental health, physical health” and a general way of living life. All these different sections all believe children’s bodies and lifestyles should be healthy (NHS England, 2023). In addition, another source also believes the impact on children’s health at a young age can impact their health throughout the whole of their life because of this, it is useful to ensure children's health is prioritised (Marmot. M, 2010). Adding to this, the Dahlgren and Whitehead model offers many frameworks to understand the intricate factors of health and has been used multiple times by different organisations (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 2021). Most adults notice that being outdoors in nature helps them regain balance in their lives. This also applies to children. There are both emotional and physical health benefits associated with being outside. According to research, having a sense of connection to nature lowers stress and enhances focus. Watkins. S, 2000. Adding to this, being outside allows children to gain a sense of nature and experience a different type of learning. However, the source also states if children are unable to experience an outdoor environment, those children are more likely to not go outside when they become adults, which can affect their health and mental health. Going outside will also encourage children to take risks and get healthy and fitter, which will support their emotional health as well as improve their physical health (Waite. S, 2011). Also, financial factors can affect children’s health for example, if a child is living in poverty, the environment may not be safe for the children and may lead to various health issues (Underdown. A, 2007). However, to ensure all children’s rights are respected and followed Article 24 states all children should have a clean and healthy environment to ensure all children are healthy (UNICEF, 2019). This also links to Maslow. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs states one of the most important factors of a child’s life is feeling safe in their home. Maslow’s needs link to health, as if the child does not feel safe in their home, it most likely is not a healthy environment for a child to be experiencing.

Wellbeing

In addition, the idea of well-being is concentrating on children's present and future lifestyles and including physical, emotional, and social well-being (Statham and Chase, 2010). There are many different psychological supports to encourage children’s well-being for example, by having a positive relationship with key adults, children feel safe and secure. Also, when children are listened to, respected, and supported, they have more of a motivation for living, which then supports their well-being (Ryff. C, 2016). This also links to Bowlby, as Bowlby believes children’s bond supports their attachment, which provides children with a positive outlook (Holmes. J, 2014). Most of the time younger children are found to have more of a positive well-being approach compared to older children and adolescents. This is found as most preteens and teenagers are going through different hormones and are at different stages of their lives. Another reason why young children have a more positive well-being is because younger children mostly understand basic emotions, as they mostly experience those. However, preteens and teenagers are more likely to be experiencing different types of emotions that they are learning about (Bradshaw. J, 2016). However, this source also says children who are unable to visit family or live with family are more likely to struggle with their well-being (Bradshaw. J, 2016). In addition, children’s well-being is found to grow more when children are happy for example, when children are playing, they are happier as they are respected and listened to (UNICEF, No Date). Adding to this, all these different reasons link to the ABC model that supports well-being. This pyramid states the different levels that support children's well-being. For example, by children playing with their friends and family they are happy as they feel safe and have a sense of belonging (Robert R 2010)

Lifestyles

In addition, this section will discuss lifestyles that support children. According to Fiorella Giovannini Torres, (2020). The meaning of lifestyle is when there are many different elements of children's lives, for example, their homes and completing different activities. Child poverty is a huge problem many children around the world are facing. Some families are experiencing "absolute poverty" this is when children are found to not have the essential aspects of life, for example, food and warmth (Save the Children, 2017). According to Save the Children, (2017) all children deserve the best start in life to develop their skills and abilities. Having a good lifestyle will allow children to develop their brains to enhance children's knowledge. Adding to this, children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences may struggle with their lifestyle. There are many different types of ACEs, for example, a death in the family, separation, domestic abuse and many more. All these different types of ACEs have impacted the children massively (NHS Public Health Wales, 2015). By children experiencing ACES, it may lead to the children growing older and putting their own lives in danger by following the same problems they have experienced, which can lead to them struggling in school and eventually struggling with bills and home life (Public Health Wales, 2024). Adding to this, another source also agrees many children who have been brought up in these situations find the behaviours they have been facing are found to be expected (NHS Public Health Wales, 2015). In addition, if children do not have a positive relationship with their loved ones, this can also affect children's lifestyle. According to, NSPCC Learning, (2021) throughout all aspects of their development, children often create relationships with others. Children and young people feel more secure and nurtured as they grow up when they have healthy, good interactions. This links to Bowlby's theory, as Bowlby believes children need to receive a bond from their carer giver (Holmes. J, 2014). Adding to this, another source also states if there are disputes between parents, it may affect children's wellbeing and encourage children to express their feelings and problems through their behaviour. It can also affect the children in their future, as children may copy what their parents do, as that's all they know (GOV.UK, 2021). This links to Bandura, as Bandura's theory explains children often observe and copy the people, they are close to (Psychology Exposed, 2025). Also, the UNCRC also links to children having a positive lifestyle, as Article 18 states all children's parents need to take full responsibility for caring for and protecting their children (UNCRC, 2019).

Early years practitioners

In addition, early childhood educators play an essential part in discovering children's issues that call for the assistance of other agencies (Hall, 2005). However, according to GOV.UK , (no date), this source believes early years practitioners often produce children attending the setting with a secure, enjoyable, and stimulating setting for all children to be happy while attending. To add to this, there are multiple different agencies that work closely together. Multi-agencies means instead of working in line or in order of sequence, practitioners from many professions collaborate on a shared project as part of multi-agency working (Payler. J and Georgeson. J, 2013). Also, there are many different support childcare practitioners do to support children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle. Children's health and social and emotional development might be influenced by a variety of issues. This involves topics including their experiences in the womb, nutrition, and their current state of their connection with their parents and other carers. This is one of the many reasons why early practitioners are very passionate about supporting children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle and ensure they provide children a safe and secure space to feel protected and happy (Gov. 2023). Adding to this, while working in childcare settings, practitioners are found to be very good at paying attention to children's feelings and ensuring they have daily check-ins with all the children to ensure they are feeling safe and happy in school (Gov. 2023).

Schools also provide support to children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle by following the design to smile. Design to Smile is a programme based in Wales that supports children's dental hygiene. Design to Smile supports and encourages families to take care of their children's dental hygiene and encourage them to attend dentists. The Design to Smile programme also provides packs for each child to take home to be consistent in looking after their teeth and allow all families to be able to support their child's health (NHS, 2022). Also, adding to this, early years practitioners also ensure to follow the seven core aims. The seven core aims are an adapted version of the UNCRC that the Welsh Assembly Government has organised and summarised seven main rights for everyone with children to be able to follow them. These aims provide practitioners with a clear understanding of the importance of children's rights. An example of these rights is for children to experience a "flying start" throughout their life another aim is for all children to have a safe environment to improve children's development (BBC, no date).

Conclusion

To conclude, as this poster has stated, children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle are very important to be secured and looked after. There are many different types of health, for example, physical and mental. All these different types of health should be cared for to help children reach their full potential. Also, children's wellbeing is found to be better when children have positive relationships with close people, for example, their key worker and family members. Children also feel safer when they are respected and listened to. Finally, children need a good lifestyle. By having a good lifestyle, children will access healthy meals and a safe and secure environment, and if children have experienced ACEs, they will have support to not follow their parents and guardians. Also, by having early years practitioners with children every day, children are able to care for and look after their hygiene as well as feel safe and secure in the setting.



(BBC, 2018).



(Early Years TV, 2025).



(NHS, 2022).

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