

Health, well-being and lifestyles

Introduction

This poster discusses the concepts of health, well-being and lifestyle of children and why this is so important in the early years. The poster will also discuss the theories behind health, well-being and lifestyle like Maslows hierarchy of needs and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system. There will also be a discussion on how early years practitioners can support children with these concepts and what their main roles are during the Childs early years to support the Childs holistic development. NHS (no date) says that the three concepts link together to create a healthy and positive child.

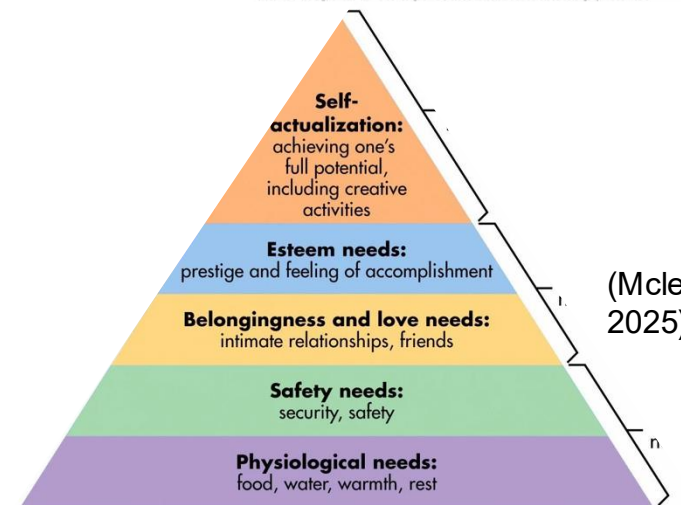
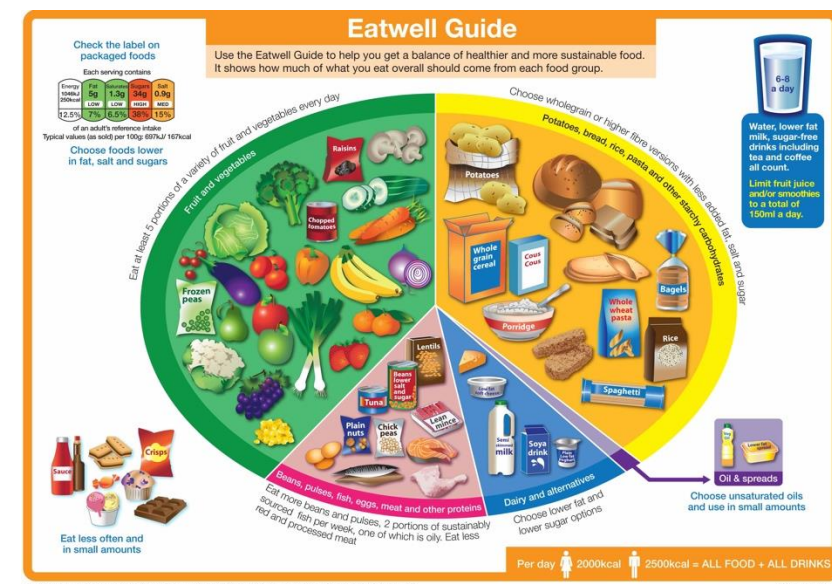
Health

Underdown (2007) says that health is a concept that needs to be looked at holistically as the meaning can range for many families, the main points that Underdown makes is that health is a range of intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development and sets the basics for the child to achieve their own goals and be satisfied with themselves. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2025) egress with this as the say that health is not only the absence of disease or illness but is a holistic state of physical, mental and social well-being.

Serbin *et.al* (2014) explains how parents have a crucial role in their childrens health. This could be by feeding them a healthy balanced diet. This consists of five portions of fruit or vegetables, meals being based on starchy carbohydrates, some protein foods like fish and eggs, having some diary such as milk and to choose unsaturated oils and spreads (NHS, 2022). The parental support that is given can affect a child health as they give the child warmth, responsiveness and emotional availability, this can change the amount of times that the child will visit the doctors and get routine visits, which can avoid a child getting sick or becoming crucially unwell (Serbin, *et.al*, 2014).

Abraham Maslow created a theory in 1943 called Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Kenrick, *et.al*, 2010). Maslow hierarchy if needs is a pyramid that shows the basic needs of a child, there is five stages to the pyramid, the first is psychological needs which is the things needed to survive, the second level is security this is when the child feels safe and cared for in their environment, the next level is belonging this means that relationship and love needs are met, the fourth level is esteem where by children need esteem or recognition for the positives in their life and lastly In the pyramid is personal accomplishment, the other tears are needs from others this tier is set as an individual need and their personality (Pichere, 2015).

(UK Health security agency, 2016)



(Mcleod, 2025)

United nations convention on the rights of the child links with health

There are many united nations convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) articles that prove health is important to children development some of these are, Article 24, children have the right to highest possible outcome for their health including their healthcare, clean water and well nourished foods, another article is article 6 the right for a child to have a life and survive and lastly article 27 says the child has the right to a standard f living to ensure positive health and development (General assembly resolution 44/45- United nations Human rights office of the high commissioner, 1989).



Image: (Jan, 2024)

United nations convention on the rights of the child links with well being

There are many articles from the United nations on the rights of the child that underpin children’s well being these include, article 19 where children have the right to be protected and feel secure from harm and abuse, article 12 they have the right to express their feelings where children can talk about their emotions and be heard whilst practitioners can boost the child self-esteem, and lastly article 9 and 18 where the child has the right to a family and can form the attachments that are needed for a healthy and happy child to develop (General assembly resolution 44/45- United nations Human rights office of the high commissioner, 1989).

Well being

United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNICEF) (2013) says that well being is looking at all the different parts of the childs life, to see what they might be missing put on and whether they are healthy individuals as well as looking at their feelings, whether they are happy with their life and feel as though they can reach their full potential. The World Health Organization (1992) says that if there is clear set symptoms or behavioural issues that is causing stress or interferes with daily routines this can be considered as a mental disorder for children.

Diagnosing children with mental health can be difficult ac their behaviour changes as they develop, by if a child is diagnosed with a mental health condition it can help them get the support that is needed and notify the services that need to be included such as therapy or if medication is needed (Musgrave, 2017). Musgrave (2017) goes on to talk about why children might suffer with mental health, children who suffer adverse effects in early childhood such as being born prematurely, growing up in poverty, being a refugee, suffering from abuse or neglect or having additional learning needs can all affect a Childs well-being. Colorado state university (no date) says that there are different types of well-being to create a positive and holistically happy child, these are emotional well-being this is when a Child is able to recognise there emotions and deal with them on a daily basis and make changes to make themselves more positive if needed, the next type is social, this is when a Child is able to make connections and relationships with others which will overall support their health and well-being, the last type of well-being is physical which is what nutrition, exercise and diseases a child is faced with that can affect their health and cause them harm. The Early Years foundation stage statutory framework sets out 7 areas of learning and development in the early years, one of these is personal, social and emotional development (department for education, 2024). The department for education (2024) says that Children’s personal, social and emotional development is essential for children on the early years as it can support their cognitive development and create a happy and healthy life for them.

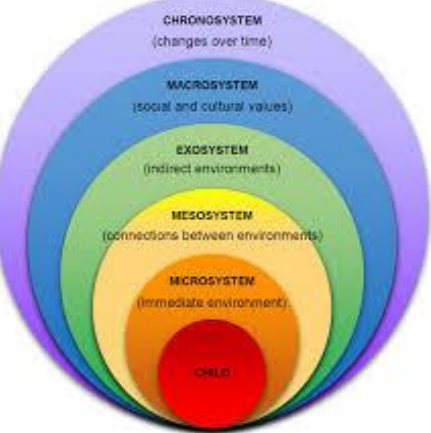
One of the key elements to a happy child is attachment with their key caregiver. Bowlby’s attachment theory recognises the different types of attachment styles and how they have an effect on the child, if a child has a secure attachment, where the needs of the child are met by the caregiver and the child feels safe and secure, they are more likely to develop emotional intelligence, good social skills and better mental health this is due to the security having a positive impact on the Childs neurological, physiological and psychosocial development (National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children (NSPCC) 2021). A different type of attachment is insecure attachment, where the child does not receive the care and security that is needed can have a negative effect on the child’s physiological and psychosocial development, this can cause children to develop behaviour issues such as Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), it can also lead to unhealthy relationship being made as this is what they are used to at home and believe it is the norm (National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children (NSPCC) 2021).

Lifestyle

Bagordo *et.al* (2017) says that lifestyle is mostly defined as the quality of a persons life and health, this is determined on the choices that are made by an individual. A healthy lifestyle for children in early years is determined of many things including a balanced diet, positive hygiene and exercise this can affect the health and well being of a child to create a positive lifestyle for the child to develop holistically (Barnardo’s, 2024).

NHS (2024) says that it recommends that all children aged 6 months to 5 years should be given vitamin supplements which should have vitamins A, C and D every day, this will support the Childs immune system and make it stronger which will develop a better overall health ad better skin. NHS The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals (2025) adds to this as they say sleep is crucial for children’s growth and health, they discuss the meaning of sleep hygiene which means the habits that the child is sleeping and how well they do this at certain ages. Parents have a key role in their child’s sleep as they need to set a clear routine each night for the child to unwind and relax before going to sleep the NHS recommend for this routines to not be longer than 30 minutes (NHS The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals 2025).

A key aspect of a healthy lifestyle in early years is to recognize adverse childhood experiences (ACES), this is when a stressful or traumatic experiences happens to a child this could be one experience or multiple situations which effects a child’s safety, security and trust (NHS Manchester University, no date). Adverse childhood experiences can affect a child's mental health later in life by causing anxiety and depression, the longer a child suffers an adverse childhood experience the bigger the impact will be on the childs development later in life (NHS Manchester University, no date).



Darling (no date)

Links with early years

Musgrave (no date) says that early year’s practitioners have a key role in children health. In Wales there is a scheme called the Welsh network of health and well being promoting schools, this is a scheme that measures how well a school looks after a child’s health and well being and celebrates the achievements that the school does to support this, the scheme includes looking at a healthy balanced and not only ensuring children eat this for school lunches abut also teaching the children about healthy eating in the classroom and why this is important (Department for education, 2022). Play is a key component to the new Welsh curriculum, The curriculum states that learning through play is a big focus as it allows the child to develop holistically whilst enjoying and exercising and staying healthy (National Day Nurseries Association, no date). This supports Children’s rights as article 31 states children have the right to rest and leisure, whilst engaging in play that is suitable to the age and development stage of the child (United nations convention on the rights of the child (UNICEF), no date).

Children’s attachment to their carers in early years settings is important, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system describes that children’s development and lifestyle is affected by the environment they are within, there are 5 layers and the first layer consists of family and early years practitioners that the child is involved with (Antony, 2022).

Conclusion

In conclusion supporting children health, well being and lifestyle in early years is important to support their holistic development. This is shown by reliable sources such as the NHS who also want children to stay healthy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system show us how important health, well-being and lifestyle is to children's development. These concepts all align and can have a positive impact on a child's life when growing and developing whilst making the right lifestyle choices. Early years practitioners play a key role in supporting the children, through secure attachments, healthy routines and meeting each Childs needs. By practitioners understanding key factors that affect a child like nutrition, sleep, mental health and well-being they are able to better support each child, whilst also following guidance from the UN convention on the rights of the child and following the new curriculum for Wales to allow children to learn through play.

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