

I have not used AI throughout this assignment.

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Part 2

Throughout this assignment there will be multiple discussions on quality. Different professions and different people have a belief in the meaning of quality and why it is important. This assignment will explore people's beliefs and what qualities are used throughout early years and how those qualities can guide children's development.

To begin with, there are many different aspects of the meaning of quality. Many early years settings believe children and adults may want to experience good qualities however, not everyone is able to have the opportunity to experience them (Moss, 2016, pp. 8-9). However, according to Bland, (2024) they believe there are many different versions of quality, and often the meaning of quality varies based on the adults and the children. Also, throughout early years settings, quality is found to be implemented by the practitioners this can be found through social interactions, children's education and children's play (Birthto5matters, 2025). While children are attending childcare settings, they are learning how to develop their holistic development. This is an important part of children's learning, as it can progress them throughout their adulthood. Childcare settings' role is to ensure the quality of care is practical for children to learn and respond to (EDT, 2024).

Also, quality throughout childcare settings is important for not only the children but also parents/carers and staff members. Throughout childcare settings the main concepts children investigate are learning and playing, ensuring staff are fully trained and areas are fully equipped creates a high-quality, nurturing setting (EDT, 2024). A website that also agrees with this is Bland, (2024) as quality standards can encourage and develop observations throughout early years settings, ensuring all areas are set to their highest potential, as it is crucial children have particular areas to ensure their learning and holistic development can be supported. This follows the UNCRC article 28, as article 28 states all children have the right to an education (UNICEF, 2019). When children access an education, it enhances their confidence. However, although having high-quality expectations is important According to, Murray, (2025) having a high-quality system in early years settings can make the children feel pressured and stressed about completing a job at a significant level. Although research has shown that when younger children attend a high-quality setting, those children are found to understand and learn more, which will support the children's transition into adolescents and complete GCSEs (GOV.UK, 2024).

To begin with, throughout this section there will be discussions about the Early Years Wales framework. The Early Years framework is a policy that focuses on developing children's holistic development and wellbeing by focusing on children from birth to seven years old and enhancing the curriculum by ensuring play-based methods are being followed (Public Health Wales, 2025). This website also explains the early years framework encourages all professionals to work alongside each other to ensure all children have the right to be supported, as each professional will be working closely with family members, their role is to understand and facilitate them (Public Health Wales, 2025). Practitioners working in early years childcare settings use the Early Years Wales framework as a guide to influence the practitioners in creating a child-friendly and inviting area to influence children's futures. Having a child-friendly area for children to learn and grow provides the children with a high-

quality experience that influences children's mental health (Welsh government, 2023). Another source that also agrees with this is Early Years Wales (2020). This source also states the framework ensures children are safe and encouraged to reach their full potential by having support from their teaching staff. Montessori's theory also relates to these sources, as he believes children should receive a child-centred approach, ensuring learning areas are created for children to be able to explore and actively learn this also encourages children with respect and independence. As explained previously, quality often means to reach an expectation, whether this is socially, academically or emotionally, this links to the Early years framework, as the policy observes children's progress and sets out a plan to support children to increase and develop holistically (Welsh Government, 2015). The early years framework is important for all childcare settings, as it creates statutory standards to encourage children to improve their holistic development and encourages children to build on their confidence and resilience (GOV.UK, 2025). This is supported by Bronfenbrenner, as Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies his ecological system can provide support towards children's intellectual growth and social growth and provide the children with a clear understanding of the benefits of development (Tong and An, 2024).

However, on one hand, according to Asquith, (2020) the Early years framework is useful however, the framework can focus more on academic goals than encourage children to independently lead play. This source also explains all children have different needs and interests that need to be focused on and supported throughout their day-to-day lives. Despite this, there is not one way of accomplishing this outcome. On the other hand, the Early Years Wales programme provides children with opportunities to learn different languages, for example, the Welsh and English languages. The programme also encourages children to experiment through their play and understand problem-solving (Education Wales, 2018). As explained previously, the early years focus on children exploring play, childcare settings are put into action by following the "Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan (ECPLC)". This plan combines usefully parts of different sections to ensure everyone implements the same approach (Welsh Government, 2026). Another source that also agrees with this is Play Wales this website believes all children have the right to have time to learn and openly play, as playtime is an important part of the day where children are able to express themselves and develop their social skills (Play Wales, ND). While research has been completed, many responders reported a problem Early Years Wales does not expand on many settings. They are finding it difficult to employ adults with the correct qualifications for the job, and there is found to be not enough funding to secure adults' wages, which can affect children's routine and learning, which can make the children feel withdrawn (Early Years Wales, 2026).

Another area that will be covered throughout this assignment is SSTEWS. According to Brief and Gardiner, (2021) SSTEWS provides children with an opportunity to experience and develop their education differently. SSTEWS stands for "sustained shared thinking and emotional well-being scale". To support this, not all childcare settings use the SSTEWS plan however, the childcare settings that do use this intervention express that they use this to support withdrawn children and support them in feeling safe and becoming more responsive when interacting with childcare practitioners and other children (Ozmelek, 2026). Adding to this, sustained shared thinking also is brought into settings to spark children's problem-solving and having a motivation to develop their academic understanding to lead them into their future. By

children accessing this support from their childcare workers, it allows the children to feel appreciated and respected (Ozmelek, 2026).

There are many advantages when childcare settings are following SSTEWS for example, by practitioners introducing this scheme into settings, it provides children with an opportunity to build confidence, learn how to problem-solve and provide an understanding of the learning topics they are learning (Siraj, et al, 2015). Another advantage of childcare settings using SSTEWS is this plan provides children and adults with an opportunity to ask and answer simple problem-solving questions that can support the children in critically thinking about the answers (Brodie, 2012). This links to John Dewey's theory, as he believes children should learn how to work together and physically complete the tasks to create the activity more visible and meaningful for the children. By children completing real experiences, it encourages them to question and understand the topic more clearly (Tata Trusts, 2024). However, research shows when children and adults are completing SSTEWS, it involves them responding with answers and questions and an improvement of confidence. This shows a disadvantage that relates to this is if the children who are completing SSTEWS are very withdrawn and anxious, the child may find it harder to respond to the question that is being asked (Leatherbarrow, 2025). The theorist who has a similar opinion is Piaget. Piaget believes there are three different elements that support his theory an example of this is schemas. Schemas are frameworks that help produce children's cognitive development. Schemas are also real-life situations that children can struggle to communicate throughout their experience (Gowrie, 2024). This is supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which explains all children should have a sense of security and have a sense of belonging before developing on their self-improvement (Maslow, 1943).

In addition, when childcare settings are completing SSTEWS, it also displays engaged children learning and academically developing this may be described as a high quality. Also, SSTEWS provides settings and an opportunity to observe and assess children throughout their day-to-day lives (Howard et al, 2018). This article also explains sustained shared thinking and emotional wellbeing were introduced into childcare settings to understand and develop children's communication and bonds with individuals, for example, practitioners and other children (Howard et al, 2018). This is supported by a version of quality known as 'structural quality'. Structural quality is followed to assess and value ratios for staff and children in the setting and ensure staff, children and parents are respected and cared for (Education Policy Institute, 2018). Even though there are many positive reasons as to why settings should use SSTEWS however, SSTEWS is an intervention scheme that is formed to provide close connections between adults and children to enhance children's learning environment and development. This explains that SSTEWS is not a method to explain to teaching staff how to teach and improve children's learning, and it does not provide staff members with strategies on how to differentiate activities to ensure all children's needs are met (Sefton Council, 2024). This links to the Children's Act 2006, as this act is used to strengthen children's development and ensure high qualities are respected in schools to ensure children are being supported throughout their learning (4Children, 2007). Adding to this, SSTEWS does not meet the legal standards, as this intervention only focuses on observing and assessing the children's targets and therefore cannot be used for safeguarding or safety requirements (Gardiner, 2017). Also, to include according to the same author, Gardiner, (2017) SSTEWS is an intervention created that expects all children to follow

the same activities and solve the same problems. This has been shown to disagree with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This intervention does not follow the UNCRC, as article 29 expresses that all types of education need to follow an aim and to be adapted to ensure all children with different needs have the opportunity to complete the tasks (UNICEF, 2019).

To conclude, all childcare settings promote high quality and expectations in their settings to push children to their fullest potential. Also, the Early Years Wales programme is found to be implemented into childcare settings to develop and fix learning areas to increase a child-centred approach and increase children's knowledge on multiple different languages. And finally, the settings that are able to use SSTEWS are found to be providing the children attending those settings with a calm and welcoming support network which influences children to progress in their learning and expressing their feelings. As explained throughout this assignment, there are many theorists and policies that support the Early Years Wales scheme and the SSTEWS intervention.

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