

Health, Well-Being and Lifestyles

Module: ECEY5009

Student ID: 2507924

Submission Date: 14 June 2026

Word Count: 1950

I can confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I can confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Link to Video

[Script.MOV](#)

Script

This script is going to discuss what poverty is, what influences poverty, how it impacts children's health, well-being and lifestyle while drawing in on what government schemes are in place to support children and families in poverty as well as what practitioners can do to further support children and families in poverty.

What is Poverty

Wolff (2019) defines poverty as not having enough resources to live a safe, healthy and dignified life, explaining that poverty is when people do not meet the basic material level needed for a decent standard of living, such as having secure housing, food and essential items. Lister (2022) adds that poverty is also shaped by social factors, it involves exclusion, inequality and being unable to participate in everyday activities that most people take for granted. Highlighting that poverty is not only about money but also about lacking opportunities and being marginalised within society. De Schutter (2024) further explains that poverty is shaped by wider systems and barriers that limit people's choices, freedoms and chances to improve their situation. Explaining that poverty is not only about low income; it is also about reduced opportunities and the social and structural conditions that keep people at a disadvantage.

What influences poverty

Children's experiences of poverty are shaped by financial pressures, home circumstances and wider social conditions that influence how they grow, feel and live each day (Marmot, 2020). When families face low or unstable income due to insecure work, unemployment, single-parent responsibilities, illness, disability or high childcare costs, they often struggle to meet basic needs such as food, heating, clothing and stable housing (Public Health Wales, 2023).

(Chaudry and Wimer, 2016) research, suggests that limited access to food and poor-quality living conditions have a direct impact on children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle: hunger and poor nutrition weaken children's immunity, it leads to slow growth and reduce energy, while cold, damp or overcrowded homes increase the risk of respiratory illness, asthma and skin conditions.

These conditions also make it harder for children to sleep comfortably or feel secure, and the absence of predictable routines around mealtimes, sleep and daily activities adds further instability. Together, these pressures shape children's daily experiences, influencing their physical health, emotional stability and the routines and activities they are able to participate in (Skinner and Kennedy, 2025).

Home environment and relationships

Poverty also reshapes the emotional world children grow up in. UNICEF UK (no date) explains that financial strain influences the atmosphere of the home, affecting relationships and the routines children rely on for stability. The continuous rise in costs for basic essentials such as rent, energy, food and school expenses increase parental stress, which can heighten anxiety, create a low mood or conflict within the household (UNICEF UK, 2024). This stress can reduce caregivers' emotional availability and the rich language interactions young children need for communication, cognitive development and emotional security (Skinner and Kennedy, 2025). Bowlby's attachment theory highlights that when caregivers are overwhelmed or emotionally unavailable, children are more likely to develop insecure attachment, reducing their sense of safety and stability (Bowlby, 1982).

Clair, Gordon and Reeves (2024) suggest when the home environment is noisy due to parental arguments or ongoing tension, children can experience heightened anxiety, fear and emotional insecurity. Persistent noise and conflict often disrupt sleep, leaving children overtired and unable to rest properly. Not having enough sleep affects children's ability to regulate emotions, making children irritable, frustrated and could lead to difficult behaviours. It also reduces concentration, memory and problem-solving skills, which can negatively affect learning and engagement in school. Over time, these experiences shape children's overall wellbeing and daily functioning, influencing how they cope, interact and develop within both home and educational settings (Andersen et al., 2023).

Community conditions and access to services

The communities children grow up in play a major role in shaping their wellbeing. Welsh Government (2024) notes that children in low-income households are more likely to live in communities with limited early years provision, fewer safe outdoor spaces and reduced access to health and community services. When affordable childcare or high-quality early years settings are unavailable, children may miss out on early learning, speech and language support and social interaction, affecting school readiness and emotional development (Welsh Government, 2024).

Environmental disadvantages also influence health and lifestyle as families in deprived areas often face weak transport links, making it harder to reach employment, healthcare or community support (UK Health Security Agency, 2024).

(MacDonald et al., 2025). State - Neglected or unsafe neighbourhoods restrict outdoor play and physical activity, increasing obesity risk, while exposure to pollution or poor-quality environments can worsen asthma and respiratory conditions.

Children's wellbeing is shaped by the opportunities available within their community; areas with fewer parks, libraries, youth clubs or family hubs offer limited chances for exploration, socialisation and enriching experiences (UNICEF, no date).

(World Health Organization (2024) - Restricted access to safe play spaces, sports clubs and stimulating learning environments reduces opportunities for physical

activity, hobbies, independence and social skill development, affecting children's physical, emotional and mental health.

Wider structural and policy factors

(Jordan et al., 2025) highlights that poverty is also strongly shaped by wider structural and policy decisions, which influence the support families receive and the conditions they live in. Rising living costs, particularly food, rent and energy, mean families are having to make difficult choices about basic needs, with many unable to make further sacrifices as everyday essentials become increasingly unaffordable. (Jordan et al., 2025) also suggests rising living costs are pushing parents into difficult decisions that directly affect children's health and development. When families cannot consistently afford nutritious food, warm housing or timely healthcare, children are more likely to experience illness, disrupted routines and reduced opportunities for healthy growth.

Research by Pichère and Cadiat (2015) explains that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs highlights how children's development depends on their most basic needs being met. When essential physiological needs such as food, warmth and rest, or safety needs such as stability and protection, are unmet, children's bodies and minds remain in a state of stress. This makes it harder for them to feel secure, regulate emotions, engage in learning and build positive relationships. Maslow's model shows that without these foundational needs, children cannot progress towards higher-level development such as confidence, curiosity, independence and meaningful learning (Maslow, 1943)

Barnardo's (2022) These financial pressures can impact children's emotional and mental well-being as the stress experienced by parents can create tension within the home and reduce the emotional availability children rely on for stability and reassurance. Barnardo's (2022) Limited income and unstable living conditions further restrict opportunities for healthy eating, physical activity, hobbies and social participation, all of which are important for building confidence, resilience and positive mental health.

Government schemes to help and what practitioners can do

Government support schemes that support children and families play an essential role in reducing the effects of poverty by improving children's lifestyle, health and overall wellbeing. The NHS Healthy Start Scheme (NHS, 2024) and the Department for Education's Free School Meals policy (Department for Education, 2024) help children develop healthier lifestyles by ensuring regular access to nutritious food, supporting physical development and healthier eating habits.

The Welsh Government's Flying Start programme (Welsh Government, 2024) strengthens children's routines and wellbeing by providing free childcare, structured play, socialisation opportunities and early intervention from health visitors who can identify issues such as poor growth, speech delay or emotional needs.

The Pupil Development Grant (Welsh Government, 2024) further widens children's experiences by funding school resources, trips and enrichment activities that families in poverty may struggle to afford.

Meanwhile, the UK Government's Family Hubs (HM Government, 2023) improve family wellbeing by offering parenting support, speech and language services and multi-agency help, reducing stress and ensuring families are not left to face challenges alone. Together, these services improve children's lifestyle, health and emotional wellbeing by creating safer, healthier and more supportive environments for those growing up in disadvantaged circumstances.

What practitioners do to support this

The Welsh Government (2022) explain that practitioners play a vital role in supporting children and families experiencing poverty by building warm, trusting relationships that help families feel respected, understood and willing to engage with support, which reflects the importance of nurturing relationships highlighted in the Curriculum for Wales.

Bradbury and Grimmer (2025) highlight that through daily practice, practitioners create predictable routines around mealtimes, sleep cues and transitions, giving children stability that may be inconsistent at home and helping them develop healthier lifestyle habits. Practitioners also model positive behaviours such as handwashing, active play and trying new foods, while providing rich play experiences that broaden children's interests, confidence and skills.

Platt and Basarab-Horwath (2019) suggest that by observing children closely, practitioners can identify early signs of unmet needs such as tiredness, poor diet, developmental delays or emotional distress and work with health visitors, speech therapists and GPs to ensure timely intervention, supporting Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children that the child's best interests must at the heart of every decision. Their support extends to parents too, offering guidance on routines, behaviour, nutrition and home learning, which reduces household stress and strengthens family relationships.

Practitioners also collaborate with multi-agency professionals and advocate for families to access benefits, food support, housing help and early intervention services, ensuring that no family faces challenges alone. Through this holistic, child-centred approach, and consistent practice, practitioners continuously support and enhance children's lifestyle, health and emotional wellbeing, creating safer and more supportive foundations for development Musgrave (2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, poverty can limit children's health, wellbeing and lifestyle by reducing their access to food, stability and positive experiences. However, support from services and practitioners helps protect children from these effects by creating healthy routines, improving access to nutrition and learning, and strengthening

emotional security. This support reduces the impact of poverty on children's daily lives and helps them grow, develop and thrive - UNICEF UK (n.d.)

References

Andersen, K. *et al.* (2023) *COVI D-19 Collaborations : Researching Poverty and Low-Income Family Life during the Pandemic*. 1st ed. Bristol: Policy Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.56687/9781447364504>.

Barnardo's (2022) *At what cost? The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on children and families*. Available at: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-10/At%20what%20cost_impact%20of%20cost%20of%20living%20final%20report.pdf (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Bowlby, J. (1982) "ATTACHMENT AND LOSS: Retrospect and Prospect," *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, 52(4), pp. 664–678. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1982.tb01456.x>.

Bradbury, A. and Grimmer, T. (2025) *Love & nurture in the early years*. London ; Learning Matters.

Chaudry, A. and Wimer, C. (2016) "Poverty is Not Just an Indicator: The Relationship Between Income, Poverty, and Child Well-Being," *Academic pediatrics*, 16(3), pp. S23–S29. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2015.12.010>.

Clair, A., Gordon, D. and Reeves, A. (2024) 'Exploring the impact of housing insecurity on the health and well-being of children and young people: A systematic review', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 158, 107331. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107331>

De Schutter, O. (2024) "What is Poverty?," *The Poverty of Growth*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Pluto Press, p. 5.

Department for Education (2024) *Free School Meals: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Ferraro, K.F., Schafer, M.H. and Wilkinson, L.R. (2016) "Childhood Disadvantage and Health Problems in Middle and Later Life: Early Imprints on Physical Health?," *American sociological review*, 81(1), pp. 107–133. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122415619617>.

HM Government (2023) *Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-hubs> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Jordan, U., Patrick, R., Power, M., Pybus, K. and Kaufman, J. (2025) "The scales never seem to balance": exploring the lived realities of poverty during the UK cost-of-living crisis through participatory research', *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, Early View. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1332/17598273Y2025D000000041> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Khatun, T. (2024) *The devastating impact of poverty: health, education, families and communities*. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383116791_The_Impact_of_Poverty-Health_Education_Families_and_Communities (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Lister, R. (2022) *Poverty*. Second edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.

MacDonald, M. *et al.* (2025) "Road safety, street design and its impact on paediatric health in the UK," *BMJ paediatrics open*, 9(1), p. e002346. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjpo-2023-002346>.

Marmot, M. (2020) *Health equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on*. London: Institute of Health Equity.

Maslow, A.H. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological review*, 50(4), pp. 370–396. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>. (Accessed: 6 June 2026)

Musgrave, J. (2017) "SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING," *Supporting Children's Health and Wellbeing*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, Limited.

NHS (2024) Healthy Start Scheme. Available at: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Pichère, P. and Cadiat, A.-C. (2015) *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Translated by C. Probert. Namur: Lemaitre Publishing.

Platt, D. and Basarab-Horwath, J.A. (2019) *The child's world : the essential guide to assessing vulnerable children, young people and their families*. 3rd ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Public Health Wales (2023) *Children and the cost of living crisis: The impact on health and well-being*. Cardiff: Public Health Wales. Available at: <https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/PHW-Children-and-cost-of-living-report-ENG.pdf> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Skinner, G.C. and Kennedy, E. (2025) "The cost of poverty for child development: The adverse impact on maltreatment, education and mental health outcomes cannot be ignored," *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, 30(2), pp. 309–313. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045241302121>.

UK Health Security Agency (2024) *Transport interventions at schools: Health impacts and benefits*. London: UK Health Security Agency. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-interventions-at-schools-health-impacts-and-benefits> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

UNICEF (no date) *Child and adolescent health and well-being*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/health/child-and-adolescent-health-and-well-being> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

UNICEF UK (2019) *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Summary version*. Available at: https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

UNICEF UK (2024) *Opening Doors: Supporting children and families*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/policy/opening-doors/> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

UNICEF UK (n.d.) *Child Rights-Based Approach (CRBA)*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/child-friendly-cities/crba/> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

UNICEF UK (no date) *Child poverty in the UK*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/our-uk-work/child-poverty-uk/> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2022) *Curriculum for Wales*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2024) *Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/child-poverty-strategy-wales-2024-html> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2024) *Flying Start: Support for Families with Young Children*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/flying-start> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2024) *Pupil Development Grant (PDG)*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/pupil-development-grant> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Wolff, J. (2019) "Poverty," *Philosophy compass*, 14(12). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12635>.

World Health Organization (2024) *Improving the health and well-being of adolescents: Accelerating action for a healthier future*. Geneva: World Health Organization. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240116313> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).