

Contents

Page 2. Script

Page 8. Reference List

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I 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.

Slide 1: TITLE and intro**Poverty**

This presentation will explore what poverty is and what effect it has on the holistic development of young children, particularly the effect it has on their health, wellbeing and lifestyle. Additionally, the role of the practitioner will be explored, to see how they can support families living through poverty.

Slide 2: What is Poverty?

According to Firth (2018), all children are affected by social, cultural and economic factors that shape their holistic development, and while some children will have positive experiences of these factors, in reality, many children are negatively affected. The term 'poverty' is generally defined by the UK Parliament (2024) as to when people lack material resources to meet minimum needs. This is built upon by the Child Poverty Action Group [hereafter, CPAG] (n.d.a), who define poverty as not having enough money to buy items for household needs and to participate fully in society.

Slide 3: Measuring Poverty

The standard way to measure child poverty uses relative household income. A child is said to be living in poverty if they live in a household with income below 60% of the national average income (CPAG, n.d.a; UK Parliament, 2024). UK Parliament (2024) has estimated that 4.3 million children were living in relative low-income households in 2022/23. Additionally, CPAG (2025), state that this number has increased to 4.5 million children in April 2024.

Slide 4: WHAT IS FOOD POVERTY

UK Parliament (2025) describes people experiencing food poverty or food insecurity as if they cannot acquire adequate quality of food in socially acceptable ways. This is similar to the Food Standards Agency (2017), who define food poverty as the inability to secure an adequate and nutritious diet and can affect those living in low-income households, with a limit in accessing transport and poor cooking skills. The Trussell Trust (2025) state that in 2024/25, they delivered 2.9 million emergency food

parcels in the UK. Within this statistic, over 1 million children received these food parcels (Trussell Trust, 2025).

Slide 5: Malnutrition

Young children have expressed their concerns to the Royal Collage of Paediatrics and Child Health [hereafter RCPCH] (2021) saying that they do not have enough money for nourishing foods, leading to an unhealthy eating lifestyle. RCPCH (2021) state that poverty is associated with adverse developmental and health outcomes, which includes poor physical health, linked with obesity, as well as poor mental health and a low sense of wellbeing. This is supported by The British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (n.d.), who state that malnutrition affects every system in the body and can result in many illnesses including diabetes, heart disease and depression.

The United Nations Child Fund [hereafter UNICEF] (2024) state that food poverty is especially detrimental in the early years of childhood as inadequate intake of nutritional foods can cause considerable harm to a child's physical growth as well as cognitive development. This is supported by Harvard University (2025), who state that an environment in which young children are not well nourished, is likely to disrupt the construction of important foundational capacities, and once established, a weak foundation can have detrimental effects on further brain development.

SLIDE 6: Bronfenbrenner Ecological System Theory

Flying Start settings play a central role in influencing children's dietary behaviours and their lifelong health (Welsh Government, 2025c). This can relate to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The theory suggests that there are four systems within a child's environment, influencing the child, which can affect holistic development (Wilson, 2025; Mukherji, 2014). Wilson (2025) and Underdown (2007, cited in Mukherji, 2014) state that the closest system to the child is the microsystem, which within lies the most direct and influential relationships to the child, which includes the family as well as the wider relationships such as nursery settings. Beyond the microsystem is another layer of wider influence, that is within the exosystem, which includes elements that can affect the child even though the child does not have a direct relationship towards to element (Wilson, 2025). This means that children's development is influenced by elements that they have no

control over, such as their parents' economic situation. Therefore, practitioners within flying start settings are one of the closest people within a child's life to influence their holistic development and can have a positive effect of children living within poverty.

Slide 7: How can Flying Starts support children living in food poverty?

Flying start settings work towards the highest standards to better and develop the food and drink offered to the children in their care, by implementing the Food and Nutrition for Childcare Settings Best Practice Guidance (Welsh Government, 2025c). Within the guidance, practitioners are encouraged to support children with developing good eating habits and help them try a variety of nutritious food (Welsh Government, 2024a). This is done to aid the children's health and development, as well as help to embed healthy habits as they get older (Welsh Government, 2024a). Practitioners create a positive eating environment by giving the children plenty of time to eat. (Welsh Government, 2024b). In addition to this, practitioners encourage healthy eating by sitting with the children when they eat to encourage good eating habits (Welsh Government, 2024b).

Slide 8: Flying Start Dietitian Support

Flying start settings also receive support from local public health dietitians, who can offer advice on local initiatives such training on nutrition within the early years (Welsh Government, 2025c). The flying start dietetic team can support families with accessing affordable healthy meals to benefit their health and wellbeing (Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.). Parents and Carers can take part in a free 9-week course called 'Get Cooking', in which sessions involve hands on cooking and activities around healthy eating and food safety (Swansea Bay University Health Board, n.d.; Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.). Additionally, sessions cover ways to reduce food waste and save money with the food budget (Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.). A dietetic assistant practitioner for Flying Start says that Get Cooking allows people to break free from a generational cycle of parents who did not cook from scratch for themselves (Cardiff and Vale University and Health Board, n.d.)

The children can also take part of 'Little Cooks', which is a cookery programme for children, developed by the Flying Start Food and Nutrition Team and the Cardiff and

Vale Healthy Eating Team (Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.). This programme helps to lay the foundations of healthy eating habits, as well as try the new foods they have been helped prepare (Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.).

Slide 9: How is the Welsh Government supporting children living in poverty?

To tackle the issues that poverty has on children in Wales, the Welsh Government (2024c) has put measures in place to respond to the rising cost of living pressures on families, to ensure that no child goes hungry in school. All primary school children in Wales have access to universal free school meals, which will not only tackle child poverty, but includes the benefits of promoting healthy eating and increasing the variety of food options for children (Welsh Government, 2024c; Welsh Government, 2025a). Public Health Wales (2023) and the Welsh Government (2025b) has stated that the intervention in which all primary school aged children receive free school meals may lead to improved nutrition which can better children's growth, development and physical health. Additionally, Public Health Wales (2023) has stated that these healthy free school meals can reduce childhood obesity as well as reduce diet-related disease and disabilities.

Slide 10: Poverty and Wellbeing

As stated previously, poverty does not only affect a child's health but also their emotional wellbeing (RCPCH, 2021; CPAG n.d.b). Children growing up in poverty go without the things that others take for granted that can lead to low mood and increased anxiety (Action for Children, 2025). Poverty affects child's wellbeing as it can mean that they miss out on everyday fun and play, as their parents or carers cannot afford the basic necessities (CPAG, n.d.b). Poverty denies children the chance to develop their interests through clubs as well as missing out on school activities (CPAG, n.d.b). This is supported by Children in Wales (2022) who state that children living in poverty may not be able to pay for school trips or clubs, and do not receive the same experiences as other children. This makes them feel lonely and left out, harming the children's wellbeing.

In fact, a parent in York disclosed that her child used to thrive in extracurricular dance classes but can no longer afford the tuition. This has affected her child's

wellbeing as did not have any friends in school, however had many of friends in dance class (CPAG, n.d.b). This has negatively affected the child's wellbeing.

Slide 11: How can practitioners support wellbeing

According to Singh (2023) play can promote a child's general wellbeing as well as give them the information and abilities needed to prosper in the future. The Welsh Government (2025c) believes that play opportunities are fundamental to cognitive and intellectual development, which enables children to develop positive self-image. In fact, play opportunities are crucial to the way children become self-aware and learn the rules of social behaviour, and that learning opportunities should be provided within these early years settings (Welsh Government, 2025c). The play environment should promote a sense of belonging where children can demonstrate levels of emotional wellbeing and be engaged within their learning (Welsh Government, 2025c). Adding onto this, Singh (2023) believes that storytelling is an effective tool that practitioners can use for promoting the emotional wellbeing of young children. Research from Ramamurthy *et al.* (2023), showed that storytelling interventions enhanced the wellbeing and resilience in children, as well as decreased symptoms of anxiety and depression. Therefore, practitioners can positively support the wellbeing of children by making sure that children have an environment that promotes play. Additionally, practitioners should include storytelling as a part of their practice to promote the wellbeing and resilience of children living in poverty.

Slide 12: How is the UK Government supporting children living in poverty?

The UK Government have also taken important steps to abolish poverty. The Government is intending to remove the two-child limit in Universal Credit from April 2026 (UK Parliament, 2026; Department of Work and Pensions, 2025). By removing this limit, families can receive the child element of the benefit, regardless of their family size (Department of Work and Pensions, 2025). The Department of Work and Pensions (2025) say that the Government believe this is a key measure in tackling child poverty and ensuring that all children have the best start in life. The UK Parliament (2026) believe that this change would result in an estimated 450,000 fewer children living in relative poverty in 2030.

Slide 13: Conclusion

In conclusion, 4.5 million children are affected by poverty in the UK (CPAG, 2025). Poverty affects children by negatively affecting their development as well as giving them poor health outcomes, which includes a low sense of wellbeing (RCPCH, 2021). Early Years Practitioners are one of the closest people within a child's life to influence their holistic development and can have a positive effect on children living within poverty. This is supported by Wilson (2025) and Underdown (2007, cited in Mukherji, 2014), who state that practitioners are a part of the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Practitioners can support children living in poverty by providing an environment that encourages play and storytelling (Singh, 2023; Welsh Government, 2025c). Additionally, practitioners within flying starts can refer families to the flying start dietic team, who can provide a cooking course, involving healthy eating and food safety (Flying Start Cardiff, n.d.; Swansea Bay University Health Board, n.d.).

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