

Cover sheet

For this assignment I have submitted the following:

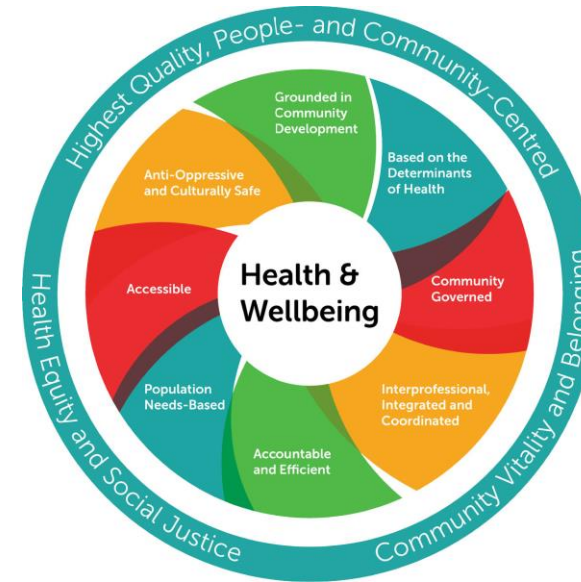
- Component 1- 15 minute recorded presentation
- Component 2- Presentation slides
- Component 3- Poster

I confirm that I have not used AI during this assignment.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I have used which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

Introduction- Health, wellbeing, and lifestyle are concepts within early child development. These concepts can define a child's early years, because experiences in childhood can have a lasting impact on their development, learning, and future outcomes (Garvis and Pendergast, 2017). A holistic approach recognises that children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development are connected and supported all together. Early years practitioners can play a crucial role in supporting this as they can promote positive health and wellbeing by creating a safe and inclusive environment, develop secure relationships with the children, encourage healthy lifestyles and work in partnership with families (Apriyansyah *et al.*, 2024).

What is wellbeing?- Wellbeing can be referred to the overall quality of a child's life, and the ability to feel happy, safe, and supported (Baylor University, 2021). It includes emotional wellbeing, such as managing emotions, feeling confident and resilient, cognitive wellbeing, which relates to learning, thinking, and problem-solving, and social wellbeing, which involves positive relationships, a sense of belonging and effective communication (Housman, 2017). Research highlights that positive wellbeing during the early years supports children's development, learning, and future outcomes. Strong relationships with adults and good quality provision has been known to improve children's emotional regulation, social and cognitive development (OECD, 2022) .



(Alliance for Healthier Communities, 2018)

What is health?- The World Health Organisation defines health as not only the absence of an illness but the state of a child's physical, mental, and social wellbeing (World Health Organization, 1948). Physical health relates to children's growth , nutrition, sleep, and overall activity and development. Mental health refers to children's emotional regulation, confidence, and attachment, while social health involves forming positive relationships and developing effective communication skills (Liu et al., 2020). Within the EYFS, health is promoted through physical development and personal, social, and emotional development, which supports children to develop healthy habits and positive wellbeing (Department for Education, 2025).

What is lifestyle?- Lifestyle refers to the daily behaviours and habits that influence health outcomes, such as nutrition, family routines, physical activity, sleep, and screen time, all of which contribute to children's growth, development, and learning (Bencsik *et al.*, 2026). Children's lifestyle is also shaped by social and cultural influences, such as family values and tradition and socioeconomic circumstances. By having positive lifestyle habits during early childhood, it can support healthy development and promote a positive wellbeing, highlighting the importance of early intervention and family support (NHS, 2022).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory-

Bronfenbrenner's theory proposed that children's development, health, and wellbeing are influenced different interactions which are split into five categories. The microsystem includes immediate relationships such as family, friends, and early years settings. The mesosystem refers to connections being made between these environments, for example communication between parents and practitioners about the child's progress (Killam and Degges-White, 2017). The exosystem then includes wider influences that can indirectly affect children, such as parental workplace stress or family networks. The macrosystem consists of cultural and societal values, laws and expectations, while the chronosystem considers how life changes over time an influence development. This theory therefore highlights that children's health and wellbeing are shaped by experiences and the wider social environment and cannot be understood only by their behaviour. (Eriksson, Ghazinour and Hammarström, 2018).

Bowlby's Attachment Theory- John Bowlby's theory argued that children need to develop strong bonds with caregivers to support healthy development. This attachment can develop when the caregivers are sensitive and responsive to a child's needs, allowing them to feel safe, develop confidence, explore the environment and build positive relationships with others (Heard, Lake and McCluskey, 2018). This theory links closely to the EYFS key person approach, which is when each child has a specific practitioner who helps them feel secure and supported within the setting. By developing trusting relationships between the practitioner and the child, it can promote children's emotional wellbeing, resilience, and sense of belonging (Hohmann, 2024).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs- Maslow suggested that individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs that must be met to support healthy development. These include physiological needs such as, food, water, and sleep, safety needs, such as security and protection, love, and belongingness, which include connection through relationships, esteem needs, including confidence, achievement, and self-respect, and lastly self-actualisation, which includes reaching the full potential (Rojas, Méndez and Fassler, 2023). Practitioners can support these needs in early years settings by providing nurturing environments, promoting positive relationships, and creating opportunities for children to learn and develop, enabling children to thrive and achieve positive wellbeing (Berlinski and Schady, 2015).

Legislations and Guidance- Children's health, wellbeing, and lifestyle are all supported through key legislations and guidance in early years. It is supported through the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024) which supports children's learning and development and promotes welfare and safeguarding (Department for Education, 2025). The Children Act 1989 and 2004 ensures that children's welfare are at the center of practice and emphasises the importance of multi-agency support (UK Parliament, 1989:UK Parliament, 2004), and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) offers the right guidance on how to protect children from any harm (UK Government, 2015). The Equality Act 2010 also support children's health, wellbeing, and lifestyle through ensuring that all children have equal opportunities and are all protected from discrimination. These legislations together, help practitioners create safe and inclusive environments which support children's health and wellbeing (UK Parliament, 2010).

Links to EYFS Curriculum- The EYFS Statutory Framework (2024) allows for children's health, wellbeing, and lifestyle to be at the center of learning and development, and by developing their social, emotional, and physical skills it supports children's emotional wellbeing, confidence, and relationships. Their physical development promotes healthy lifestyle through exercise, self-care and movement, communication and language allows children to build relationships, express their feelings and develop their social wellbeing. Through understanding the world, children develop an understanding of the environment, the community and healthy choices, characteristics of effective learning also encourage children to be resilient and motivated learners, supporting both cognitive and positive development (Department for Education, 2025). This all contributes to a holistic approach to children's health, wellbeing, and lifestyle.



(Pinterest, 2026)

Research Evidence- There are many studies that demonstrate the importance of health, wellbeing, and lifestyle during early childhood. The Marmot Review (2010) discovered that health difficulties can begin early in life and are strongly influenced by social factors such as income, education, and living conditions, furthermore, the 2020 Marmot Review update found that health difficulties in England had risen of the past few years, emphasising the importance of early intervention (Marmot, 2010: Marmot, 2020). The Tickell Review 2011 emphasised the importance of children's health and wellbeing within the EYFS as building positive relationships with a practitioner can prevent or support mental health difficulties (Tickell, 2011). Lastly, evidence from Public Health England and NHS guidance, shows that regular physical activity supports children's physical, emotional and cognitive development and also them to become ready for school (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019). Together, this evidence shows that supporting children's health and wellbeing during the early years can reduce mental difficulties and improve future outcomes.

Factors influencing health, wellbeing, and lifestyle- There are a range of factors that can influence children's health and wellbeing. One being family income, as it can affect the access children have to nutritious food, healthcare, and learning opportunities, while the quality of housing can affect their safety and physical health. Good nutrition supports healthy growth, development, and learning, whereas poor nutrition may lead to illnesses and health difficulties (Robbins and Sanders, 2023). Parental mental health may also influence children's emotional wellbeing and development by causing long-term distress and vulnerability to developing a mental health issue of their own. However, access to community resources, such as healthcare services and appropriate facilities, can support positive outcomes for children, along with environmental quality and opportunities for outdoor play, allowing them to develop their physical and social skills and support their health and wellbeing (Sadrkhanlou *et al.*, 2021).

Role of the Early Years Practitioner- Early years practitioners play a vital role in promoting and supporting children's health, wellbeing, and positive lifestyles. They support healthy routines by providing children with healthy food and drinks, encourage physical activity, good hygiene and appropriate rest, and promote positive behaviours by ensuring children have secure attachments through using the EYFS key person approach and warm, responsive relationships (Whitters, 2017). Through regular assessment and observation, it allows them to identify and respond to children's wellbeing needs at any time and in a timely manner, they ensure there is a good partnership between themselves and the families which enables them to provide consistent support which improves outcomes for children. They also ensure the environment surrounding the children is safe and inclusive, allowing the child to feel valued and respected. Furthermore, practitioners must advocate for children's rights, follow safeguarding procedures, legislations, and guidance to ensure children are protected and are able to thrive (Unicef, 2016).

Conclusion- In conclusion, health, wellbeing, and lifestyle are concepts that are connected and play a fundamental role in children's development and future outcomes. Health includes physical, mental and social wellbeing, while wellbeing includes emotional, cognitive and social aspects, all of which support children's learning and development, allowing them to have the best future outcomes. Lifestyle factors include nutrition, sleep, physical activity and consistent family routines, which are all shaped by the wider environment such as housing and income. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Bowlby's Attachment Theory demonstrates the importance of relationships, environments and meeting children's needs to promote positive wellbeing. In addition, legislations, guidance, and research evidence emphasise the need for early intervention and identification and a holistic approach, which allows practitioners to support every child in achieving positive wellbeing and reaching their full potential. Through the EYFS framework, early years practitioners can create a safe, inclusive environment, build secure relationships and work with families to promote healthy lifestyles.

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