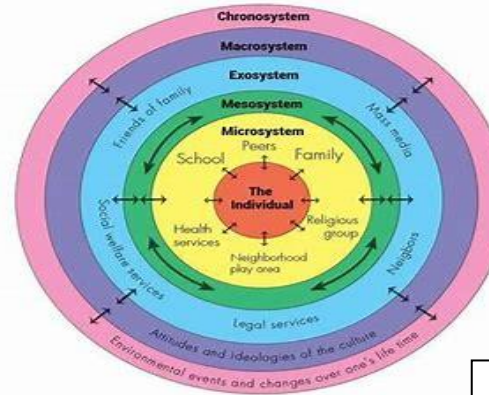


Health, wellbeing and lifestyle.

Introduction

This poster will be discussing health, wellbeing and lifestyle and how it links to early years. **(Help for early years providers: Health and wellbeing, no date.)** states that Health, well-being and lifestyle in the early years are foundational to a child's overall development and future success. The practitioner's role will also be discussed and how they can support children in their settings. And the different theories and practice which is also linked to health, wellbeing and lifestyle.



(Guy-Evans, 2024)

Health

Health is defined by (World Health Organisation, 2024) as health is more than just the absence of illness or disability, it is a condition of whole physical, mental, and social well-being. (Public Health England, 2016) also agrees stating that having good health is essential because it impacts nearly every aspect of life, enabling individuals to live fulfilling, productive, and meaningful lives. (NHS, 2021) also agrees by adding bad health can significantly impact your life in various ways, limiting physical abilities, reducing energy levels, and making daily tasks challenging. It can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress, while also creating feelings of frustration or low self-esteem. Chronic illnesses or poor health may shorten life expectancy and increase risk of complications. Financial strain from loss of income can add to the burden, while decreased productivity at work or school may hinder career or academic progress. Relationships can suffer as individuals become more dependent caregivers or struggle with social isolation due to limited participation in activities. Additionally, bad health can lead to lifestyle changes, such as dietary restrictions and reduced physical activity, as well as a higher risk of developing other health problems. Overall, poor health negatively affects physical, emotional, and social well-being, highlighting the importance of early intervention and healthy habits. The first five years of a child's life impacts long term, social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. (Education, 2023) supports that a child brain development during the first 5 years of life increases rapidly, during this time children learn to do some incredible things such as, walk, talk and crawl, which is commonly encouraged by the child's caregiver or microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This is such a crucial time to inherit good habits, such as eating healthy foods, taking care of ourselves and enjoying outdoors, by enabling adults demonstrating these healthy habits, it then normalises them into everyday routine for children.

Well-being

(Mental Health Foundation, 2015) defines well-being as the overall state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of life. It is influenced by factors such as physical health, which involves proper nutrition, exercise, and rest. Mental and emotional health, including positive emotions, stress management, and psychological resilience, and social connections, which provide support and a sense of belonging. Economic stability, ensuring financial security to meet basic needs and pursue goals, and a sense of purpose and fulfilment through meaningful activities, also play crucial roles. Together these factors shape an individual's quality of life and overall satisfaction. (Department of Health, 2014) agrees by stating that well-being is important because it directly impacts an individual's quality of life, productivity, and ability to thrive in various aspects of life. When people experience high levels of well-being, they are more likely maintain good physical health, foster positive relationships, and cope effectively with challenges. Well-being also enhances mental and emotional resilience, enabling individuals to navigate stress, make better decisions, and achieve personal and professional goals. (Welsh Government, 2020) also adds that good wellbeing in the early years is essential as it lays the foundation for children's lifelong health, development, and success. It helps them build emotional resilience, enabling them to manage their emotions, cope with challenges, and develop self- confidence. Physical well-being supports healthy growth and brain development, while positive social interactions foster secure attachments and a sense of belonging. Additionally, well-being enhances cognitive development and concentration, encouraging active engagement in play and learning. Early experiences of well-being also establish patterns for good mental health, reducing the risk of future mental health issues and building resilience to adversity. By nurturing well-being, children are better equipped to thrive emotionally, socially, and intellectually, setting the stage for a happy fulfilling life.



(McLeod, 2024)

Lifestyle

(Cambridge dictionary, 2023) defines lifestyle as the way a person lives, encompassing their daily habits, behaviours, routines, and values. It is influenced by factors such as culture, personal preferences, and environment. A lifestyle includes various aspects such as health and wellness, diet, exercise, and sleep, social life, relationships and community involvement, work and career, hobbies and interests, financial habits, cultural traditions, living environment and technology use. These choices significantly impact an individual's physical health, mental well-being and overall quality of life. (World Health Organisation, 2010) adds that having good lifestyle is important because it directly impacts your physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. A healthy lifestyle, which includes balanced nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep. And stress management, helps prevent chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. It also boosts energy levels, strengthens the immune system, and promotes longevity. Beyond physical health, a good lifestyle enhances mental and emotional well-being. It reduces stress, improves mood, and fosters resilience against mental health challenges like anxiety and depression. Positive lifestyle habits, such as nurturing relationships, engaging in hobbies, and maintaining a work-life balance, contribute to personal fulfilment and happiness. (Tello, 2021) agrees that ultimately, living a good lifestyle enables you to perform at your best, build meaningful connections, and enjoy a higher quality of life. It lays the foundations for long-term health, success and satisfaction. (Healthy and Active Lifestyles- top tips for early years settings, 2019) states that demonstrating a healthy lifestyle to children in their early years is highly beneficial as it shapes their long-term habits, values, and overall development. By modelling behaviours such as eating nutritious meals, staying active, and prioritizing sleep, adults help children develop healthy habits that promote physical well-being and reduce the risk of illnesses. A healthy lifestyle also supports emotional well-being by teaching mindfulness, stress management, and resilience. Proper nutrition, physical activity, and rest enhance brain function and focus, aiding in learning and social development. Additionally, children are more likely to adopt behaviours they see adults practicing, making positive role modelling crucial for fostering kindness, balance, and self-care. By engaging in healthy social activities and demonstrating strong communication skills, and adults help children build positive relationships and develop essential social skills. Overall, a healthy lifestyle equips children with the foundation for long term health, happiness and success.

Theories that link to health, well-being and lifestyle

Two theories come to mind when researching health, well-being and lifestyle, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system and Maslow hierarchy of needs. (psychology Notes HQ, 2021) agrees by adding that Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory highlights how various environmental factors interact to influence and individuals' health, well-being and lifestyle. The microsystem, including family, friends and schools, directly impacts habits such as healthy eating and exercise, while the mesosystem, which connects these environments, reinforces behaviours through relationships like parent- teacher collaboration. The exosystem, consisting of external factors like parental work environments and healthcare access, indirectly shapes lifestyle choices. At a broader level the macrosystem encompasses societal norms, cultural values, and policies that influence attitudes towards health and wellbeing. Finally, the chronosystem considers the impact of life transitions and historical events, such as pandemics or technological advancements, on lifestyle patterns over time. Together, these interconnected systems emphasize the need for a holistic approach to understanding and promoting health and well-being across different levels of influence. Gormon, 2010) also states that Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains how human motivation influences, health, well-being, and lifestyle by prioritizing needs in five levels. Physiological needs, such as food, water, and sleep, are essential for survival and physical health. Safety needs, including security, financial stability, and access to healthcare, promote mental well-being and reduce stress. Social connections and a sense of belonging, found in love and belonging level, are crucial for emotional health and encourage positive lifestyle habits. Esteem needs, such as confidence and recognition foster self-worth and motivate individuals to pursue healthier choices and personal goals. At the top, self- actualization involves realizing one's potential and leading a balanced, purpose-driven lifestyle that prioritizes physical and mental well-being. Maslow's framework highlights the importance of addressing these interconnected needs to support holistic health and long-term well-being. In conclusion both theories both prove that health, well-being and lifestyle are very important factors that an enabling adult should demonstrate within children's lives from early years to lay the foundations to encourage future success.

how to ensure that children have positively applied good habits to their health, well-being and lifestyle

(CDC,2024) states that Ensuring that children positively apply good habits to their health, well-being, and lifestyle involves a multifaceted approach that combines education, role modelling, and creating supportive environments. Adults can lead by example, demonstrating healthy habits such as balanced eating, regular physical activity, and stress management. Educating children about the importance of these behaviours helps them understand their value, making it easier to apply them. Making healthy choices fun and engaging like cooking nutritious meals together or playing active games encourages children to adopt these habits. Establishing consistent routines around meals, exercise, and sleep provides structure, while promoting positive social interactions and mental health awareness fosters emotional well-being. Providing praise and reinforcement for positive behaviour boosts confidence and motivates children to continue healthy practices. Lastly, creating an environment that supports these habits such as having healthy snacks readily available and designating spaces for physical activity makes it easier for children to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle. By combining these strategies, we can guide children toward making positive choices that benefit their overall health and well-being. (Making healthy choices- Newcastle hospitals NHS foundation trust, 2025) also agrees adults can ensure children maintain good health, well-being, and a positive lifestyle by modelling healthy behaviours, providing education, and creating a supportive environment. Leading by example, adults can demonstrate habits such as eating nutritious meals, staying physically active, managing stress, and prioritizing self-care, which children are likely to adopt. Educating children about the importance of healthy eating, physical activity, sleep, and emotional well-being helps them understand the benefits of these habits. Establishing consistent routines for meals, exercise, and rest provides structure and stability. Encouraging positive social interactions and teaching emotional regulation further supports mental health. Offering praise and reinforcement for good behaviour boosts children's self-esteem and motivation, while ensuring the home environment is stocked with healthy foods, opportunities for physical activity, and spaces for relaxation promotes a balanced lifestyle. By combining these strategies, adults can help children develop lifelong habits that support their overall health and well-being

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Conclusion

In conclusion, health, well-being, and lifestyle are crucial in the early years as they lay the foundation for a child's future physical, emotional, and mental development. The habits and behaviours formed during this period significantly influence a child's overall growth, academic performance, social relationships, and long-term health outcomes. Good health and well-being in early childhood promote strong immune systems, improved cognitive function, and emotional resilience, while also fostering positive habits that children carry into adulthood. By prioritizing these aspects early on, children are better equipped to face life's challenges, build confidence, and develop a strong sense of self. Therefore, investing in the health, well-being, and lifestyle of young children is not only essential for their present quality of life but also for their future success and happiness.

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