

Childhood Poverty



WHO?

- Focussed age range: 7-11 years old

WHAT?

- Implications poverty has on the child

WHAT?

- Household income below 60% of the median

WHO?

- 28% of children in Wales
- One third of children in Wales
- Approx 200,000 children



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CONSEQUENCES

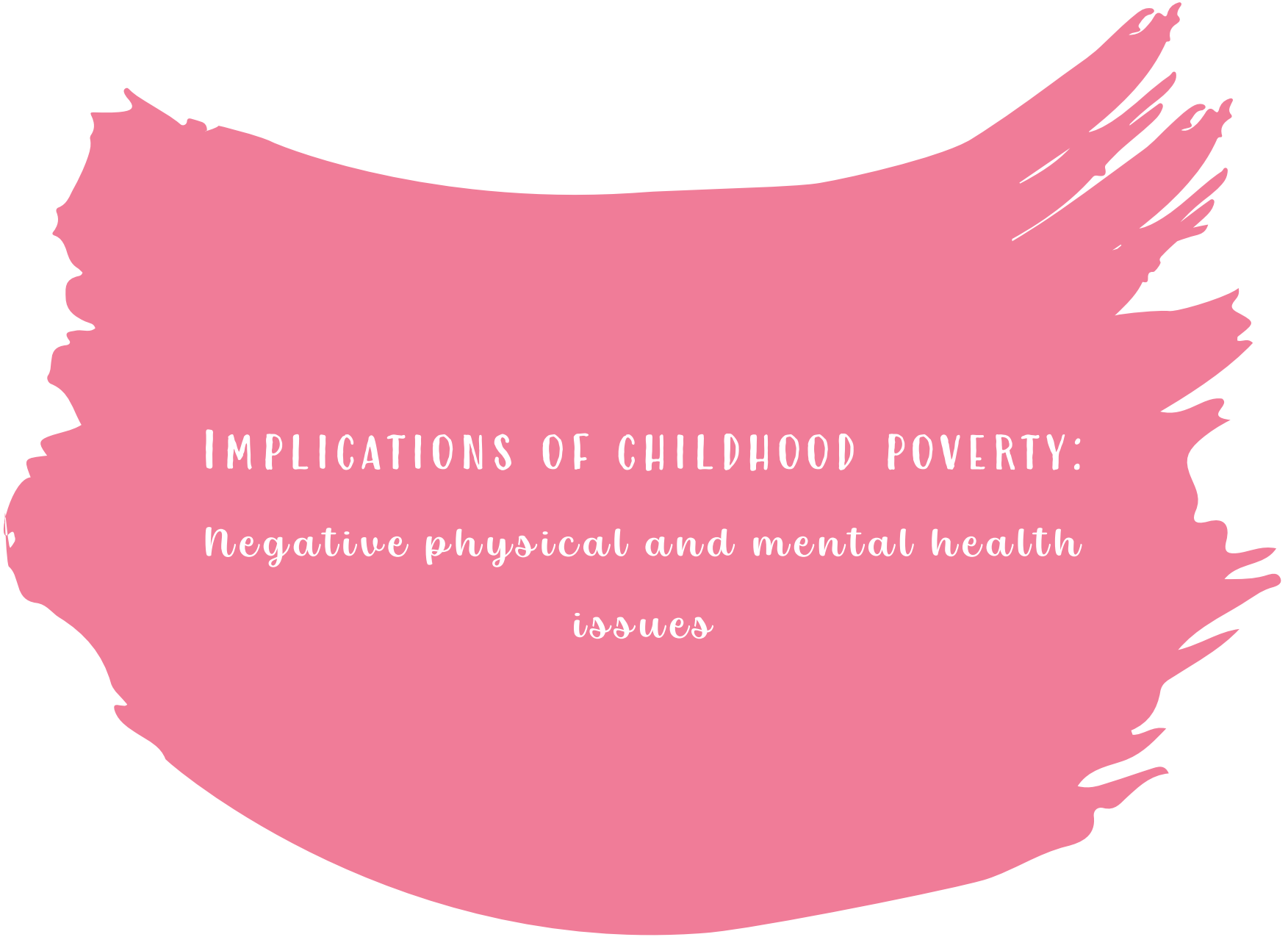
- Poorer mental health
- Poorer physical health
- Lower school attainment

7-11 YEARS OLD

Examples of development:

- Gain cognitive control
- Increased ability to respond to stimuli
- Increased awareness of own feelings
 - Form more complex relationships
- Increased understanding of other's feelings



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IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD POVERTY:

*Negative physical and mental health
issues*

MENTAL HEALTH

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Predicted PTSD
- Higher psychological stress levels

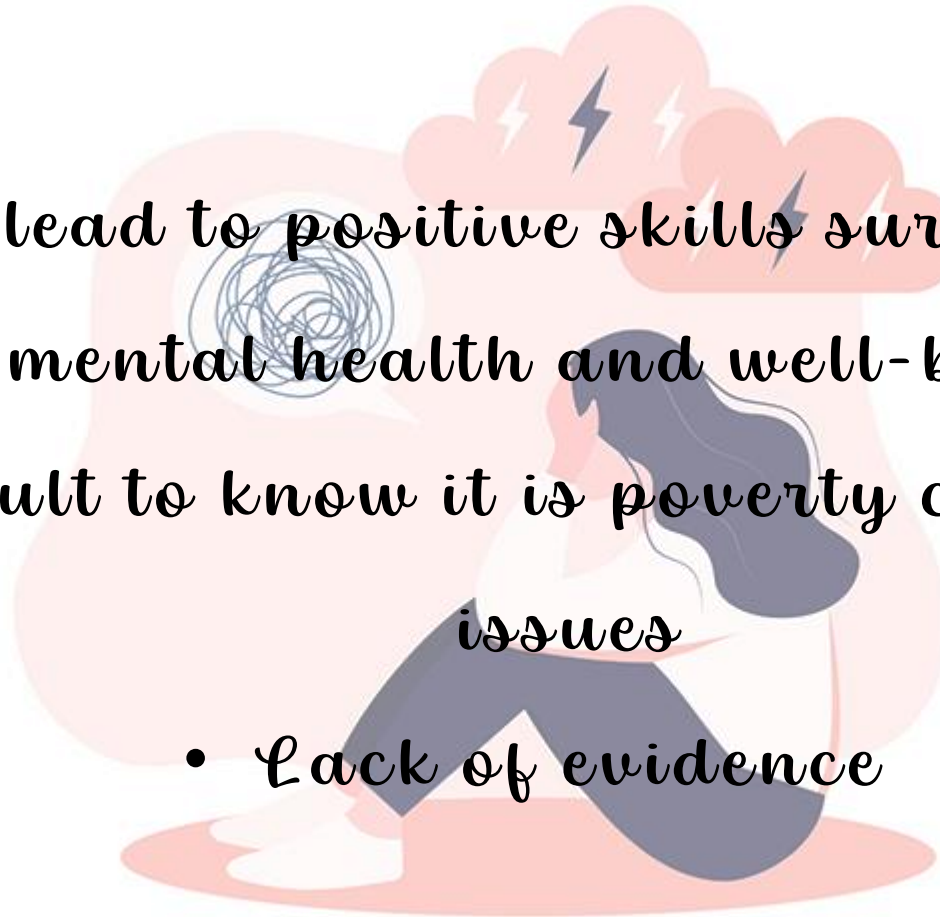
- Poorer quality of life
= Lower life satisfaction



MENTAL HEALTH

CRITIQUE

- Can lead to positive skills surrounding mental health and well-being
- Difficult to know it is poverty causing the issues
 - Lack of evidence



INTERVENTIONS



Parenting support groups



Budgeting advice



Early intervention

Can help the family and child's mental health

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IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD POVERTY:

Educational attainment

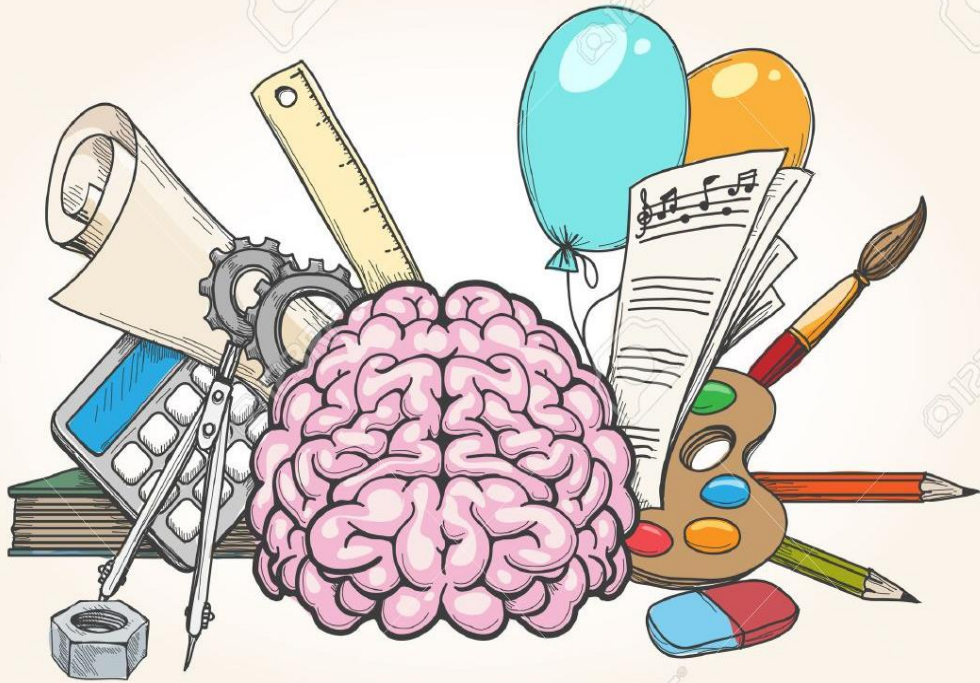
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



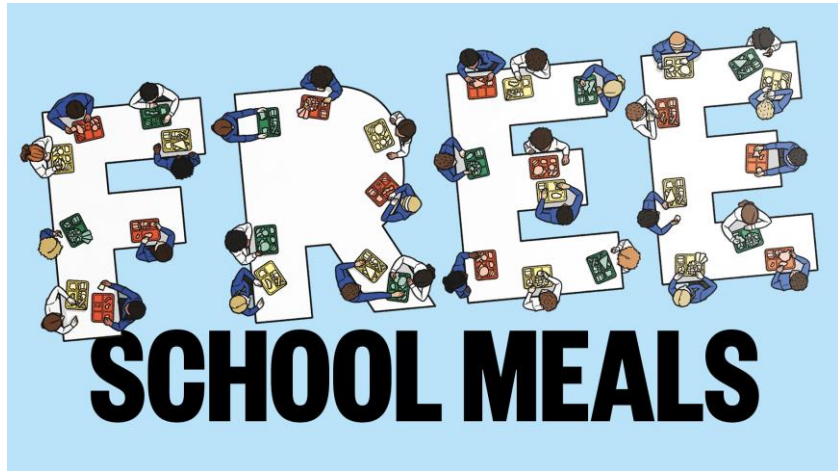
- Lower levels of attainment
- Clear link between deprivation and education
- Lower levels of school readiness before beginning
 - Lack of resources
 - More likely to leave education

CAN EDUCATION HELP TACKLE POVERTY?

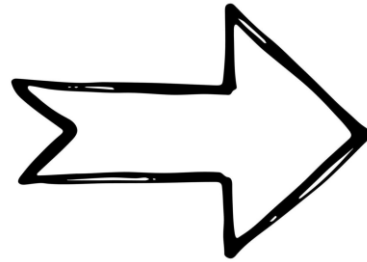
- Secondary education = 60%
reduction in chance of living in
poverty in future
- New skills and achievements = more
job prospects



INTERVENTIONS



Free school meals



- *Clear link between
nutrition and
cognitive function
/ development*

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IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD POVERTY:

Social impacts

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

7-11 key age for social development

- *Large value on peer relationships*
 - *The concrete operations stage*
- *Friendships contribute to social and emotional development*





SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Poverty could lead to social exclusion within children

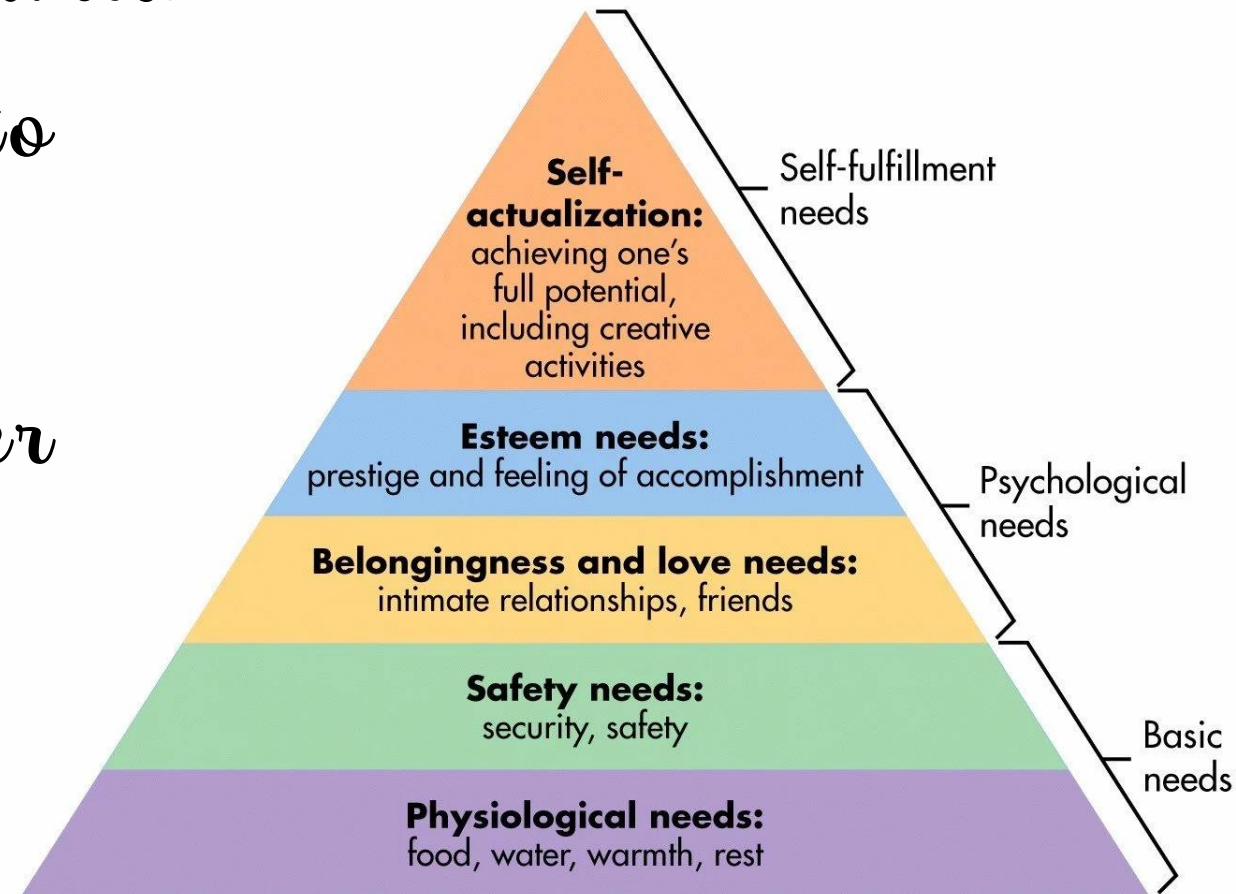
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COMPASSION

- Strong sense of compassion and empathy
- Emotional empathy and can display this skill

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

- Lower levels of the pyramid may not be met due to poverty
- Could result in poorer quality of life



INTERVENTIONS



*Families first,
Welsh Government*



Collaborative work

CONCLUSION

- Implications can be detrimental to child, however appropriate support can reverse and overcome these issues

Thank you for listening to
my presentation



Presentation script

Hello, my name is Megan Evans, and I would like to begin by giving a warm welcome to my presentation today. The focus of my presentation today is child poverty, with the age range 7-11 years old in mind. The presentation will also explore the implications living in poverty may have on an individual's life and also development. This proposes the question, what is child poverty? According to Action for Children (2024) a child is thought to be growing up in poverty if they live within a household where the income is below 60% of the median for that particular year. In 2023, the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees was £34,963, as stated the Office for National Statistics (2023). Meaning if a household's income was around £20,977 in 2023, they would have been considered as a family living in poverty. Bessell (2021), recognised that childhood poverty has a detrimental impact on the child at present and also in the future, which will be discussed in depth throughout the presentation.

Looking at statistics closer to home led me to discover alarming figures from the Child and Family Poverty Survey, they report that 28% of children in Wales are living in poverty (Children in Wales, 2023). Hughes and Davies (2019) acknowledge that nearly one third of children in Wales live in poverty which is a significant figure and is equivalent to around 200,000 children (Save the Children, 2017). Also, Senedd Research (2021) acknowledge that childhood poverty is a continuous, substantial challenge for the Welsh Government and unfortunately the increasing cost of living has amplified this issue. Research suggests that children living in Wales who are growing up in poverty and in deprived areas face numerous long-term consequences, including poor mental and physical health and also lower school attainment (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2023). However, it is important to recognise that although evidence highlights issues which occur due to childhood poverty, it is also possible to reverse and overcome these implications with appropriate support and interventions (Schickedanz et al., 2015). This will also be considered in further detail throughout the duration of this presentation.

The correlation between poverty and adverse childhood experiences, also referred to as ACEs are defined as complex, although there is growing evidence surrounding the association between deprivation and ACEs (Camacho & Henderson, 2022). An ACE is defined as a traumatic event that children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old have experienced (Crouch et al., 2019). Growing up in poverty may mean that the child is often deprived of certain aspects of life, such as necessities, including food, this is therefore seen as a traumatic event (Lee et al., 2021). Moreover, strengthening this ideology, Walsh et al (2019) conveys that children living in poverty in low-income households are often associated with greater risk of ACEs. To conclude this discussion, Hughes and Tucker (2018) place emphasis on the link between poverty and damaging outcomes in adolescence and adulthood. Therefore, indicating that poverty can be considered as an adverse childhood experience (ACE), which will consequently have detrimental consequences on the individual.

Poverty can affect any individual at any stage of their life and can have negative implications on the individual's health and also development (Gupta et al., 2007). However, this presentation will focus on children from the age ranges 7-11 years old. According to Mah and Ford-Jones (2012), from the ages 7-11 years old children will gain cognitive control with an increasing ability to respond selectively to stimuli. In terms of social development, they will begin to become more aware of their own emotions, recognising that they are different to others. Research has acknowledged that during the ages 7-11, children begin to form stronger, more complex relationships with their peers and recognise the emotional value of these friendships (Kington et al., 2013). Moreover, children aged 11 years old will experience a large transition as they usually begin secondary school at this age. This transition can be an extremely difficult and challenging time for children due to the large differences between the schools (Visser et al., 2023). The research discussed places emphasises on the developmental changes which a 7–11-year-old will experience throughout the duration of these years.

Next, I will move on to discuss the potential implications that poverty can have on the children/young person's life and development. Research draws attention to the fact that any exposure to poverty during late childhood leads to negative physical and mental health consequences (Lai et al., 2019). An implication which has been widely researched surrounding childhood poverty is the development of mental health issues as a result of this challenge. According to research, childhood poverty can be linked to mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, as well as predicted PTSD (Nikulina et al., 2011). Strengthening this, it has been discovered that children who live in poverty experience significant higher levels of psychological stress than those who do not (France et al., 2022). The results of the KiGGS cohort were discussed by Schlack et al (2021) and discovered that mental health problems in childhood and adolescence were often associated with factors such as, poorer quality of life, which can often be a further implication of living in poverty (Deutsch et al., 2003). Therefore, the evidence which has been discussed demonstrates that growing up and also living in poverty can often lead to mental health issues in later adolescence and adulthood. Knifton and Inglis (2020) conclude this, agreeing that poverty in childhood can cause poor mental health problems through numerous factors such as, social stress, stigma and also trauma.

However, although evidence clearly highlights that growing up in poverty can lead to negative mental health issues, the ideology has also been proposed that children living in poverty can build resilience and therefore overcome these challenges (Keita, 2014). Moreover, it has been argued that it is difficult to confirm an individual's mental health issues are due to poverty due to other socioeconomic factors, as these could also be contributing to an individual's mental health issues (Kim et al., 2015). Emerging literature has investigated the correlation between childhood poverty and brain development and found it to be a complex relationship, suggesting although there may be a trend and link between statistics, there is still a lack of evidence to confirm that poverty is linked to mental health issues (Dufford et al., 2020). This evidence is therefore a critique of the concept that mental health issues are an implication of childhood poverty.

It is significant that if a child or young person began to display symptoms of mental health issues that interventions are put in place to support the individual. It has been suggested that psychosocial interventions can help mitigate the effects of poverty on mental health (Wahlbeck et al., 2017). Interventions such as, parenting support programmes can help the wider family and therefore in turn aid a child's mental health in relation to the issue of poverty, through budgeting advice for example (Morris et al., 2017). Early intervention is significantly important in terms of children's mental health as this will help lessen the likelihood of further issues throughout life with aspects such as employment and health for example, as Colizzi et al (2020) agrees.

I will now move onto the next point of discussion which is an additional implication, educational achievement. Evidence demonstrates that children living in poverty are more likely to have lower levels of educational outcomes, suggesting there is a clear relationship between deprivation and education (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Moreover, data found that teachers usually associated low achievement with socio-economic factors, such as poverty, based upon their stereotypes of previous students (Thompson et al., 2016). Furthermore, Ferguson et al (2007) state that children living in poverty frequently start school behind their peers due to their school readiness, and this will therefore carry out through their educational journey. Evidence indicates that poverty can affect a child's school readiness, due to their intellectual skills, motivation to learn and also their emotional capabilities (Williams & Lerner, 2019). On the other hand, Turnbull et al (2022) argues that statistics do not imply that there is a difference between figures of school readiness of children living in poverty and those who do not, therefore highlighting inconsistencies in the research discussed.

Although there may be some inconsistencies surrounding school readiness and children living in poverty, research demonstrates that poverty significantly affects a child's educational journey which is therefore detrimental for the age range I have chosen to discuss due to the transition to secondary school. Children living in poverty may have a lack of resources and this will, therefore, consequently affect their academic achievement in comparison to their peers (Lacour & Tissington, 2011), and this will therefore have a considerable influence on children's learning and achievement within school. This evidence agrees with the concept that childhood poverty has a detrimental impact on a child's educational outcomes (Hair et al., 2015). Though, it is important to highlight that poverty will not only affect a child's educational attainment but also their opportunities within the education system. McKinney (2014) suggests that childhood poverty can be a barrier to accessing the same opportunities and resources within the educational system, which would consequently affect their outcomes in school.

Additionally, in relation to childhood poverty and educational outcomes, research has implied that those living in poverty are more likely to leave education early when compared to their peers, which therefore jeopardises their opportunities to learn and develop new skills (Huisman & Smiths, 2015). According to Egan (2013) the educational performance of Welsh children living in poverty are lower than those who are from different financial backgrounds, stating that studies have displayed that children living in poverty are more likely to under-achieve. This will consequently have a detrimental impact on the child's future as research demonstrates a strong link between educational attainment and employment rates (Yabiku & Schlabach, 2009). This evidence implies that as children living in poverty are more likely to have lower educational outcomes than their peers, this will affect their employment opportunities in future.

However, while the evidence discussed suggests that a child aged 7-11 years old living in poverty will have lower educational outcomes than their peers, alternative literature suggests that poverty can be reduced by the educational system. Research highlights that having a secondary education decreases the chances of living in poverty as an adult by almost 60% (Spada et al., 2023). Further strengthening this viewpoint, Brown and James (2020), agree that education offers children inclusive opportunities to develop new skills, which they will be able to use throughout their life, which may consequently help them overcome potential similar poverty issues in future (Ivinson et al 2017). Thus, therefore implies that although a child may grow up in poverty, the education system can help reverse and also overcome these implications, suggesting they may not carry these challenges throughout adulthood. Therefore, challenging the evidence which has been previously discussed within this presentation.

Interventions such as free school meals can help combat the challenges relating to poverty and educational attainment. Welsh Government (2023) states that all primary school children in Wales will receive free schools' meals by 2024 to ensure no child goes hungry in school. Research conveys that nutrition has significant effects on the brain's function, as Taras (2009) states, agreeing that a child's nutrition affects their cognitive function therefore impacting their educational attainment. Also, studies have revealed that children with healthy, nutritional diets perform better in schools (Florence et al., 2008). Thus, therefore indicates that interventions such as free school meals can help overcome issues in relation to poverty and educational attainment. Moreover, this is particularly important for the age range discussed in this presentation, as this highlights an important time of development as the child begins their journey from childhood and adolescence, emphasising the need to correct nutrition opportunities (Mah & Ford-Jones, 2012).

Now, I would like to discuss the social implications of poverty on children and young people. Research shows that at around the ages 9-10 years of age, a child/young person will begin to value their peer and friend groups over their family, highlighting the influence these relationships have on the individual (Malik & Marwaha, 2022). Piaget referred to the cognitive development which occurs between ages 7 to 11 as the concrete operations stage, stating that children begin to understand logical reasoning (Rabindran & Madanagopal, 2020). Further supporting this, Maunder and Monks (2018) acknowledge that between the ages of 7-11 years old, children begin to identify friendships as a significant part of their life, which contributes to their social and emotional development.

However, it is recognised that they also begin to understand what others have and may therefore experience confusion surrounding their challenges (Xiang et al., 2018). Unfortunately, research has suggested that children who are living in poverty have fewer school-class friends and are more often isolated, due to a lack of participation in activities, as Hjalmarsson and Mood (2015). The literature discussed therefore suggests that during the ages 7-11 years children are significantly developing social bonds with their peers, however, often as an implication of poverty the children become excluded as they may be unable to attend activities for example, which their peers do (Newson, 2016).

On the contrary, Peplak and Malti (2021) recognised that children and young people, particularly between the ages 8-11 years old, begin to have a strong sense of compassion and empathy and the target of their compassion is often towards their peers. This can be supported as during late childhood and adolescence, research proposed that individuals have emotional empathy and are able to display this skill to those around them (Gaspar & Esteves, 2022). Therefore, this discussion highlights that although research suggests children living in poverty may struggle with their relationships with peers due to the development of compassion, these challenges can be critiqued and may be seen as relative to the individual, rather than a generalised implication of poverty (Gilbert et al., 2017).

Additionally, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is relevant to the discussion, as it refers to a pyramid of human needs which were arranged in a hierarchy, arguing that survival needs must be satisfied before the higher needs can be met (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Generally, it is clear that all children require basic necessities, such as food, clothing and shelter (Prince & Howard, 2002), which can be seen at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. However, unfortunately in some cases of poverty, it may be challenging to meet the basic needs of the child, which appear at the lower level of Maslow's hierarchy (Gennetian et al., 2010). Therefore, as the basic necessities are often left unmet when living in poverty, this means the individual is unable to move up with hierarchy of needs and if these needs are not met, it is proposed that it can lead to detrimental health issues (Dar & Sakthivel, 2022).

However, although evidence suggests that living in poverty can affect the way of which a child's needs are met, there are interventions and schemes in place which work to overcome these challenges to ensure all children are reviving their basic needs. For example, Welsh Government (2017) outline the Families First programme, which was designed to improve outcomes for children and young people aiming to provide support for whole families rather than individuals. Research places emphasis on the importance of intervention through different support systems working in collaboration with one and other, suggesting interventions are essential when ensuring the needs of the child are being met, particularly when living in poverty (Blitz et al., 2018). This therefore highlights that although there is abundance of literature and research surrounding the implications of poverty on meeting the needs of the child with appropriate interventions and support, these challenges can be tackled and also reduced.

I have now come to the end of my presentation. To conclude, late childhood, referring to the ages 7-11 years old is a significantly important time of development for the children as they are undergoing numerous changes, not only physically but also in aspects such as education for example. These transitions and changes are often a challenging and difficult time for the individuals, and this can be further implicated by issues such as, poverty. Poverty is defined as when an individual is living 60% below the median income for that particular year and unfortunately this can result in detrimental implications for the child. The effects of poverty can be alarming and highly challenging for those within that situation, including both physical and mental health issues, which could potentially follow the child throughout their lifespan and affect their future. The chosen implications of childhood poverty which were discussed throughout this presentation were mental health issues, educational attainment, social matters and also the needs of the child. It has been highlighted that without effective, appropriate interventions and schemes the implications and effects of childhood poverty can be detrimental to an individual. However, it is important to acknowledge that poverty does not define an individual and these challenges can be diminished with the correct support.

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