



ECEY5009

wellbeing, care and healthy lifestyles

I can confirm I did not use AI throughout this assignment

Poverty

Aims and outcomes:

The impact of poverty
of the lives of
children, young
people and their
families

to explore what
poverty means for us
in the United
Kingdom

Links to the early
years

Supportive theorists

What is poverty?



JRF defines poverty as: "When a person's resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs including social participation."

(Joseph Rowntree Foundation [JRF], 2026)

They explain poverty as not just being a number in a bank account but the need to live without being able to access basic needs such as food heating or a stable home

Poverty in wales?

why are we talking about it?

the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2024) there are a high number of children in Wales living in poverty, around 30%

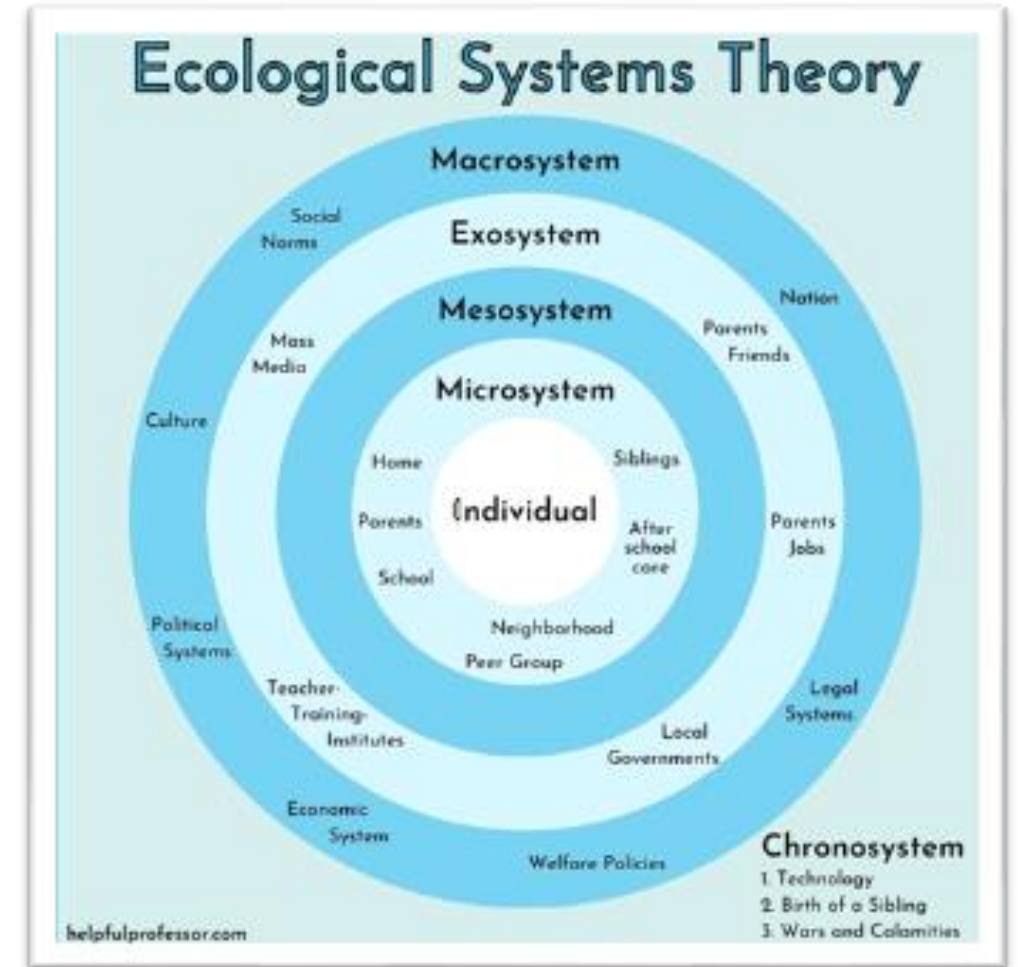
There are around 26% of children living in poverty that live within working families

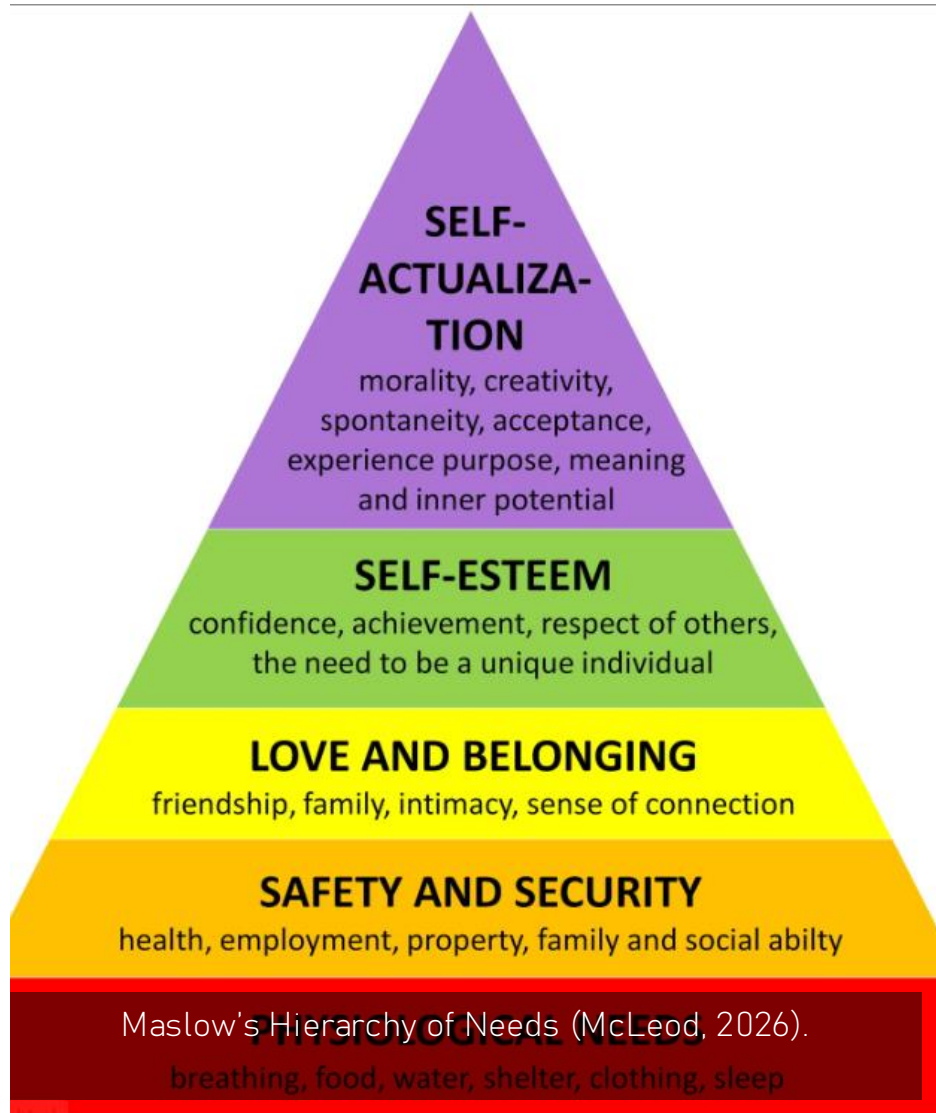
And around 45% of children between the ages of 7 and 11 explaining they were worried about where their next meal was going to come from

Links to Bronfenbrenner

As we can see for the attached diagram of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, the child is at the core of the circle

- The microsystem
- The mesosystem
- The exosystem
- The macrosystem





Maslow's his hierarchy of needs

How poverty links to Maslow:

Statistics show children in Wales are worried about food

Parents are suffering emotionally

People in Wales are living in inadequate living conditions

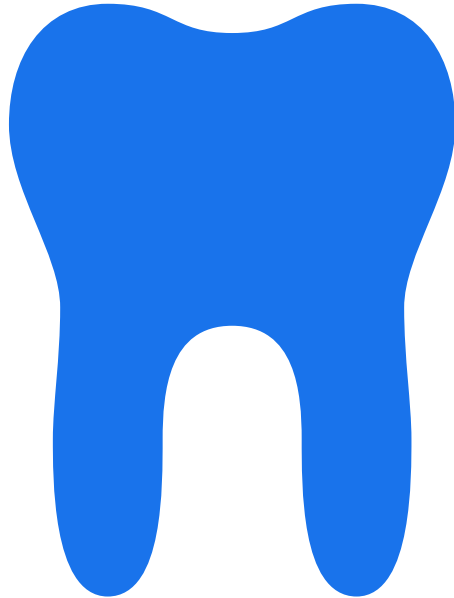


John Bowlby (The Bowlby Centre, 2026).

Links to attachment

- Living in poverty can be a such a tough time for families.
- Living in poverty does not mean that the parent is to blame
- Children in poverty are not less loved
- Living in poverty causes a state of toxic stress
- (Joseph Rowntree Foundation [JRF], 2026)
- (Wray, 2015) "economic pressures will first affect the emotional lives and marital interactions of adults and then diffuse into the caretaking environment of the children."

The effects of poverty on oral health



What is the designed to smile programme about?

(Morgan, 2016) explains how based on the levels of deprivation and the age group of young children were suffering with low dental hygiene causing cavities, the design to smile programme would focus their efforts within schools and early years settings, to support these families that are in need the most.

How successful is the programme?

(Public Health Wales, 2023) explain that 2022/23 report, that number jumped up significantly to 1,003 settings, meaning 50,705 children were actively brushing their teeth at school or nursery

544 schools assisted in facilitation fluoride application visits – meaning children were receiving an extra layer of protection on their teeth.

Are there and disadvantages?

The success of local childcare initiatives



What is Flying start?

Core aims of Flying Start?

Benefits of Flying Start for the child:

- Access to a play environment with skilled and professional practitioners
- Language support
- Opportunity to explore the Welsh language in Welsh medium settings
- Opportunity to socialise and develop skills

(Welsh Government, 2024)

Critiques of Flying start

- The economic shocks of recent years: the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and more than a decade of austerity have hit vulnerable families hardest. Rising prices, insecure work and stagnant wages have pushed too many households to the brink. Children and young people have borne the brunt, missing out on opportunities, stability, and the simple security of knowing their families can make ends meet. (Welsh Government, 2025)



Recent progression in Newport

"Between 2023 and 2025, the programme exceeded its target of supporting 9,500 additional two-year-olds, with childcare places offered to over 13,400 children and more than 10,000 taking up a place." (Welsh Government 2026)

In more positive news Welsh Government, (2026) claims that Flying Start Newport is one of the first cities in south east Wales to offer free childcare for all 2-year-olds in the city,



To conclude

From the information provided, it can be seen that there are a significant amount of children and families living in poverty within Wales and the United kingdom.

There are many challenges that come with this that mean children are not successfully having their needs met and this is influencing their futures.

The role of the early years settings and schools are significant in meeting the demands of children, supporting emotional needs, providing secure attachments and consistent boundaries are important foundations for children to build on.

The government have successfully implemented initiatives and schemes to support children and their families in the early years. Particularly in Newport, although it should be recognised that this work will need to continue to improve to continue supporting those in need.



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Notes

- Slide 3:
- The Joseph Roundtree foundation is an established foundation working to achieve a world where people can flourish free from poverty.
- They define poverty as READ THE SLIDE
- Talk about the effect of not having food, heating, link to Maslow, physiological needs – children that are hungry and without the basic necessities such as food or shelter are likely to be unable to think about anything else, without these basic needs being met they are less likely to be healthy and be successful in reaching their goals and milestones. Within an early year setting a child that is not having their physiological needs met may be less likely to explore their surroundings and build relationships with practitioners due to being withdrawn and not feeling like their best selves.
- Talk about the pressures on families, and the knock on effect this could have on children - parents that are living in poverty could be living with extreme stresses and the constant stress and worry hostile environments may affect relationships, link this to Bowlby – it is not purposeful and not always the parents fault however living in stress can affect children and have an impact on neurological development in the future.
- Slide 4:
- There are a significant number of children and adults worried about the cost of living and living with the fear of not knowing how they are going to be able to cover the costs of the basic items that they need
- e.g. healthy foods, fruit and vegetables, lean meats providing nutrition, this has the potential to have a big knock-on effect to development and health in their futures.

Slide 5:

- Microsystem is the closest links to the children, the home the school, siblings etc,
- The mesosystem represents that links and communications between the people represented in the microsystem
- The exosystem represents governments and parent's friends – people that would be more further afield to the child but they still have some sort of impact
- And then again, the macrosystem is further afield again, such as policies and links to culture.

From this we can see that poverty can impact the child strongly from the very closest of links, as previously discussed, when a family is living through poverty it can be a time of extreme stress for parents, these feelings can be felt by the child, there is possibly less calm and more anxiety around the child which will then have a knock on affect with the child, meaning the security of their attachments are being jeopardised

Slide 6:

Whilst living in poverty makes it is impossible for children to climb through Maslow's hierarchy of needs and establish self-actualisation being the best versions of themselves

For children to have their physiological needs met, they need to be able to have nutritional meals, be able to sleep well, and have their basic needs met. There could be moments where this may not be achieved, with families accessing little to no food, which could cause them to have poor sleep, which could affect routines and stability.

Overcrowding could be an issue, with multiple family members sharing rooms, disruption to sleep, again affecting routines and wellbeing – issues such as these can impact a child's health, lifestyle and wellbeing.

Slide 7:

From this slide we can see that attachment can be such a difficult time for families, parents may feel to blame and feel as though they are seen in a negative light because of the situation that they are in. The highly stressful situation caused because of poverty puts parents in vulnerable situations, this then gets passed on to the children. Parents may be in a situation where they need to work multiple jobs to try and afford the basics for their children, leading to less time spent at home and the fracture of relationships. The pressures of trying to find money to provide for their children can lead to parents feeling stressed and overwhelmed, and they then have less patience with the children. This inconsistency of care and breakdown of feeling safe and secure has the potential to form insecure attachments between children and their carers. As we know from exploring Bowlby that insecure attachments have negative impact on children as they navigate through childhood and into adulthood, through affective their confidence, their ability to trust in others and building positive friendships and relationships in adulthood.

Lack of consistent care is what puts a child in Toxic stress – where a child has learned to live in a state of high stress due to the toxicity of the environment that they live in.

Slide 8

We can see these links to Bronfenbrenners Exosystem. As the Welsh Government did not just randomly pick a place to start rolling out this programme, they specifically researched the areas that may need it the most and made that their starting point. This system located the schools and early years settings with the highest oral health need.

As we can see that the toothbrushing scheme has been rolled out throughout so many schools and nurseries supporting children with their oral hygiene and attempting to combat early tooth decay in young children, however there are some disadvantages that mean not all children that could access the scheme actually access it. Around 367 refused to rejoin or sign up to the programme altogether, during the covid 19 pandemic the scheme was struggling due to schools and early years settings having to introduce many safety restrictions, cuts in budget and staff being unable to priorities time to support it.

Since covid has come to an end the designed to smile programme has managed to gain back many early years settings and are supporting so many children with their oral hygiene by visiting settings and observing toothbrushing, providing toothbrushing equipment to the early year's settings and schools, and providing toothbrushes and toothpaste to children for their homes.

Slide 9:

The Flying start programme is an initiative created by the Welsh Government to help support children and families in low-income areas in Wales.

There are 4 core aims of Flying Start; these are quality childcare –

1. they offer 12.5 hours of children for 2 years olds within the catchment areas every week (term time)
2. They offer a more intense health visiting scheme where children and families receive more visits, support and guidance throughout the early years through midwives and health visiting teams.
3. speech and language support through groups and interventions to support and encourage the development of language skills
4. access to parenting support

The help of Flying Start provides families with a good start in gaining parent support to break cycles and improve outcomes for children in deprived areas. Giving children the chance to have their needs met at an early age gives them more skills and experiences to build on to encourage them to be confident as they move through to school. The role of the practitioner is to provide a support system to the child through being attentive to their needs and building the attachments that may be lacking in the home due to the stresses of living in poverty.

- Slide 10:
- A common talked about disadvantage linked to The Flying Start programme is that participants are selected from a system known as a postcode lottery. This means that the families that are invited to attend are within certain boundaries that have been mapped out in the most deprived areas. From the quote above we can see that there are many recent and current issues that are sending parents and families from being comfortable to now struggling and are now falling into the category of living in poverty- many families that do not live in the boundaries of the flying start zones are struggling financially and are unable to access the help and support needed for their families to be able to provide the best opportunities for their children.
- Slide 11:
- Newport have been progressing rapidly with the expansion of introducing free childcare to 2-year-old
- This progressive stage offers children 12.5 hours of free childcare every week during the term.
- This is such positive news for toddlers and their families in the Newport area it means that all toddlers and their families can access that comes with the Flying start programme such as parenting advice, high-quality childcare, enhanced health visiting service and support for speech language and communication needs.
- The fact that these families can access these initiatives is a step in the right direction to access support services which can help families that are living in poverty. It also offers fair opportunities for all children, rather than those that have been able to access the service through being within the original post coded areas.
- Children can attend playgroup sessions and access a range of fun learning opportunities and experiences, build relationships with other children as well as staff especially a key worker – where strong attachments could be formed promoting confidence and happiness, something children could be lacking in the home due to living in high pressure situations. Children have healthy snacks and toothbrushing every day, and healthy routines supporting them in making good habits as they grow.