

Introduction

This poster will discuss and explore the ideas of health, lifestyles and well-being and how these are imperative in the early years. It will also explore how different theories and models link to the early years. This poster will delve into the links between these concepts with an emphasis on positive relationships. According to Durden (no date) positive relationships in the early years provide secure attachments within the child’s development. Gregory (2023) suggests that relationships in early childhood are fundamental as this is a significant period for children’s relationships and interactions and can mould their skill development. Gregory (2023) also states that positive relationships make children feel loved, secure and safe. The role of the practitioner will also be discussed. This poster will explore different ideas and how they provide provision in regard to health, lifestyles and well-being with an emphasis on holistic development.

Concepts

According to the Department of Health (2014) there is a link between health and wellbeing, health impacts well-being and well-being impacts health. They suggest that health is a top priority when it comes to well-being. A person’s mental and physical health effect a person’s well-being. However, mental health and wellbeing exist separately mental health is not opposed to having a mental illness. Langevin (2024) believes that well-being, lifestyle and health are entwined yet are still independent.

Health

According to the world health organisation (2025) health can be defined as mental, physical and social well-being and not just the non-existence of disease. It is also suggested that having good health is a vital human right. Everyone has the right to good health regardless of their race, political belief, economic or social condition (WHO,2025). However, Musgrave (2017) suggest that health and well-being is defined as the attainment and upkeep of mental stability and physical fitness. According to forward (2019) holistic health is an overview of all areas. This includes the intellectual development, spiritual development and their person over health. This includes physical, social and emotional wellbeing and mental health. It is suggested that holistic health gives a whole insight into the overall health of the child. They also imply that holistic health also includes one’s beliefs, lived experiences, interpersonal relationships and knowledge. This defines who that person is and will form thoughts actions and behaviours.

Department for Education (2023) suggests that mental health in young children is defined as the child’s wellbeing in regards to their emotional and social development. Each individual child will have their own diverse experiences within their metal health. This may be influenced by factors such as nutrition and their relationships with their parents or guardians. According to Hogg and Moody (2023) having positive mental health allows one to enjoy life and overcome challenges and not just any diagnosable illnesses. It is also suggested that mental health is unique to each person and no two people will have the same experience as it is so vast. Positive mental health during the early years of life enables children to be able to regulate their emotions, to form positive relationships, and the ability to explore, play and learn.



(Forward,2019)

Hogg and moody (2023) suggest that having positive mental health during the early years allows children to grow and develop the ability to have positive mental health in later life. CDC (2024) states that if a child with mental health issues does not receive a diagnosis and treatment early on, it can impact the child's school life, home life and potentially cause problems when forming friendships with their peers. It is also suggested that mental health conditions can delay a child's healthy development. This can present problems in later life. Roberts (2010, p23) states that the children's plan: building brighter futures suggests that mental health and emotional wellbeing are a vital feature of children's lives. These competences are formed from having a supportive and loving family and home life that provides good positive experiences. Having good strong mental health and social and emotional wellbeing helps children build resilience. Boston University (2022) states that social wellbeing is where people construct and uphold positive relationships that are authentic. According to Maholmes (2014) this can relate to the child's home environment or their parental finances.

UNCRC (2023) states that article 24 suggests that children have the right to healthcare and it should be to the highest possible standard. Children have the right to both physical and mental health. It is also suggested that children have the right to substantial nourishment and a healthy and safe environment. Within this article children have the right to have knowledge about their health and have a opinion on how they feel about that information.

Well-being

Hapus (2024) suggests that wellbeing is how people feel, act and think. If you feel good it is said that person has good mental wellbeing. According to NHS (2022) wellbeing is defined as not just having good health. Wellbeing includes a child's mental health and how they perceive themselves. It is suggested that there is not one singular definition that covers wellbeing. However, NHS (2022) states that wellbeing is thought to consist of positive emotions, perceptions of one's own lives and making them worthwhile and fulfilling. It is also suggested that wellbeing consists of mental and physical health. Musgrave (2017) suggests that both wellbeing and health are defined as the attainment and maintenance of mental and physical stability. According to Manning-Morton (2014) wellbeing in children presents characteristics such as enthusiasm, emotion regulation, confidence in their opinions and feelings, a sense of belonging and confident to take risks.

Statham and Chase (2010) suggest that wellbeing is multi-dimensional and surrounds physical social and emotional wellbeing concentrating on the child's life and future. According to UNICEF (2022) in order for a child to have good emotional wellbeing they need playful moments in their lives. It is suggested that through play children make sense of their environment and learn. When children are playing and having fun, they are developing vital skills such as cognitive, social, cognitive and emotional skills. However, they also suggest that play is much more powerful and deep than just that. Play is significant in the formation of children's mental health. UNICEF (2022) also suggests that when children experience play with their parent or guardian, they are at a lower risk of developing anxiety, aggression, depression and sleep issues. They also suggests that when parents take the time to play with their children they are developing strong bonds with their child. According to NSPCC (2021) attachment is where a child forms positive relationships with their care giver. This is linked to Bowlby's (1997) attachment theory. When children form these attachments, it provides them with a sence of safety and security, this therefore enhances their emotional wellbeing.

Care learning (2025) states that psychological wellbeing is defined as attributes of mental , cognitive and emotional health. It is how people act in their everyday life. This includes having the ability to manage their thoughts and emotions.

Maslow (1943) and his hierarchy of needs shows the basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid. Once these are achieved then one can move up to the next tier,

Maslow (1943) states that within the hierarchy of needs that there is a need for nourishment, sleep, physical activity. Safety, security among others. This links to wellbeing in the early years as without these wellbeing can not be achieved.



(simply psychology, 2025)

Lifestyle

According to Brivio *et al.* (2023) it is hard to define lifestyles as it does not have a general meaning with one definition. Bagordo *et al.* (2017) suggests that lifestyle can be determined as the characteristics of one's health and life since their childhood. It is implied that if behaviours are rectified during early childhood then in later life they may have lower risk factors. Lioret *et al.* (2020) suggests there are many factors that effect a child's life such as the environment they live in, opportunities, the child's diet or even their living conditions. According to the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (no date) there are six lifestyle choices that will define a child on what they will do in later life. The six common life style choices are Nutrition, Physical activity, Stress, sleep, social connection and the risk of substance. If a child does not have enough nutrition then this could cause health issues and also physical issues. According to Welsh Government (2022) Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) mean that's the child has a negative experience this could be traumatic for them and can indicate that the child may have lower expectations into adulthood. It is suggested that children that have suffered these ACEs may have suffered mistreatment, this could be physical, emotional abuse or neglect. Some children that have suffered ACEs may come from a home that has domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse or mental illnesses. This can have a negative affect on children, they may develop low self-esteem and confidence which could in turn effect relationships. It is suggested that this can have an impact on the child's health and wellbeing.

Application to early years practice

The department of education (no date) states that early years practitioner contribute greatly to children's lives. Public Health England (2021) suggests the early years workers impact on young children's lives by informing parents and carers of programmes, such as healthy start. They also support parents by emphasising the need for physical activities and oral health. Early Years Careers (2025) suggests that early years practitioners can help children to form life long skills such as healthy eating habits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that children's health, wellbeing and life styles are all intertwined and have a great impact on one and other. It is obvious that early years workers as a whole play a vital role in ensuring children are encouraged to have positive health, wellbeing and lifestyles.

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