

AI Statement

I acknowledge the use of Google Scholar (Available at: <https://scholar.google.co.uk/>) for the purpose of research in relation to Module 8 – Well-being, Care and Healthy Living (ECEY5009).

I confirm that I have also kept my research notes should they be required.

1. Define breastfeeding
2. Define bottle feeding
3. What does it mean to be bottle fed or breast fed – Journal Article
4. Why is breastfeeding important in relation to health, wellbeing and lifestyle of infants
5. What are the health benefits of breastfeeding
6. Are there health benefits to being bottle fed
7. Health comparison of bottle/ breastfeeding
8. Initiatives to support breastfeeding
9. Breastfeeding challenges
10. What can the UK do to address better outcomes for children in early feeding journeys
11. How does breastfeeding support wellbeing and does bottle feeding offer the same?
12. Bowlby in relation to breastfeeding
13. Maslow in relation to breastfeeding
14. Bronfenbrenner ecological systems
15. Guilian and polices to support breastfeeding and positive outcome for children

Module: ECEY5009

- Section 1 - Video Presentation Link
- Section 2 – Presentation Script
- References

Section 1 -Video Presentation Link

Recap: Meeting with Rachael Baugh (2413982) 15 June

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetingrecap?driveId=b%211sXGrk_4bEK0UW4KKF0js3aF_psWJRFDtbZDN33Z_7ei4YUAv5ySS4ZrIfPIkEC2&driveItemId=012EVVDQCYM5TPGZNURRELPPVFK5GM42XL&sitePath=https%3A%2F%2Fuowtsd-my.sharepoint.com%2F%3Av%3A%2Fg%2Fpersonal%2F2413982_student_uwtsd_ac_uk%2FEVhnZvNltlXlt76IV0zOausBhqMf2llbrPKYu_kwQgcWEA&fileUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fuowtsd-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2F2413982_student_uwtsd_ac_uk%2FDocuments%2FRecordings%2FMeeting%2520with%2520Rachael%2520Baugh%2520%282413982%29-20250615_213812-Meeting%2520Recording.mp4%3Fweb%3D1&threadId=19%3Ameeting_OTYxMGMzYWQtMDlhZC00NTY2LTg4OTUtMGFhNmQwY2MxMjU4%40thread.v2&organizerId=5835e102-63fa-44af-877c-13b2d5ff1612&tenantId=4e0f11f9-046e-4505-9cb8-db2152311e21&callId=98c6019d-70df-45ac-af24-7770087e9f1a&threadType=meeting&meetingType=MeetNow&subType=RecapSharingLink_RecapCore

Section 2 – Presentation Script:

Bore da and croeso. Good morning and welcome to my presentation, Today, I am going to discuss the importance of early childhood nutrition through the lens of breastfeeding with comparisons made to bottle feeding and the impact this has on health, well-being and lifestyle for infants.

This presentation will cover:

- A definition of what breastfeeding and bottle feeding is
- Why is breastfeeding important?
- The Health, Well-being and Lifestyle impacts breastfeeding has
- Role of Multiagency Work
- Conclusion

What does breastfeed or bottle-fed mean?

Firstly, what does it mean to be breastfed or bottle fed? According to the Enice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of child health and human development (2017) breastfeeding is the natural process of feeding a young infant exclusively with milk from the mothers' breasts. However, bottle feeding according to Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust (2025) defines bottle feeding as a method of feeding an infant using a bottle which could be either contain formula milk or expressed breast milk.

Next, why is breastfeeding important?

Perez-Escamilla *et al.* (2023) states breastfeeding supports healthy brain development for infants and prevents health burdens such as malnutrition, infectious diseases and mortality. According to, Bjarnadottir (2024) this can be attributed to breast milk being highly adaptable, providing all the essential nutrients an infant requires to grow and develop. Additionally, Jozsa and Thistle (2023) highlight the role of colostrum in providing vital antibodies that support infant immunity protecting them from infection and reduces the risk of illnesses having lifelong beneficial effects.

Health Impact:

I will now talk in more depth about the health impacts of breastfeeding for infants. Breastfeeding is widely recognised as the healthiest way to feed infants offering advantages for immunity, reduced risk of infection and cognitive outcomes. WHO (2023) states that infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life for optimal health, growth and development outcomes. NHS (2023) agree that breastfeeding has many health benefits due to its tailored nature to meet infants' nutritional needs as well as providing natural antibodies offering protection from infections and diseases. Additionally, UNICEF UK (n.d.) highlights research based on The Lancet in 2016 and NICE emphasizes breastfeeding in improving health outcomes, saving lives and cutting costs globally. They also highlight the role of breastfeeding in protecting infants from health concerns such as diabetes, asthma, obesity and sudden death syndrome. However, despite the numerous well researched benefits and positive outcomes breastfeeding provides infants, Roberts *et al.* (2023) highlight challenges in the form of feeding problems, public attitudes towards breastfeeding and the quality of health services and support available to families as influencing feeding choices. This combined with marketing towards formula milk means bottle feeding is often the preferred option. NHS (2023) advocates for breastfeeding as best practice but acknowledges bottle-feed as an alternative highlighting formula milk as also providing essential nutrients for infant growth and development. However, research by Li *et al.* (2014) indicates bottle feeding infants having impacts for children's eating behaviours later in life due to overriding their natural ability to regulate their own energy causing overfeeding, linking bottle feeding to childhood obesity. McCarthy (2020) acknowledges that while breastfeeding is the natural way to feed an infant that provides many health benefits the role of bottle-feeding using formula or expressed breastmilk as an alternative should not be undermined.

Well-Being Impact:

This leads me to discuss the impact breastfeeding has on wellbeing in infants. Modak *et al.* (2023) acknowledges that while breastfeeding has many physical health benefits due to its nutritional content there is growing evidence that highlights the interplay of hormones on emotional bonds and the impact this has on psychological

wellbeing of infants. Modak *et al.* (2023) acknowledges the importance of Oxytocin also known as the bonding hormone that is released through breastfeeding and skin to skin contact. This hormone is vital to promoting love, trust, and attachment to enhance infants' overall well-being. Additionally, Purkiewicz *et al.* (2025) also highlights oxytocin's role in reducing stress hormones such as cortisol that supports infants to regulate in response to stress having positive impact for emotional development and behaviour enhancing ability to relate to others. They also emphasize fatty acids present in breastmilk positively impacting well-being by reducing conditions caused by low mood, social withdrawal and anxiety leading to depression. According to Bowlby (1958) infants are born with natural instincts to suckle cling and cry and these behaviours reinforce attachment to its mother. This suggests breastfeeding supports an infant's natural driven instincts to develop secure attachments fostering safety and security and providing the foundations to developing healthy future relationships. Research in attachment associations by Linde *et al.* (2020) indicates differences in attachment and in particular higher levels of disorganisation of attachment in bottle fed babies compared to secure attachment seen in breastfed infants. Therefore, suggesting those early feeding experiences influence longer term emotional security and behaviours. Maslow (1943) developed a hierarchy of needs that emphasizes the interconnectedness of adequate nutrition and relationships in creating good health, emotional safety and security to foster confidence and esteem to enable children to explore their worlds and achieve their full potential and this is reflected in the early feeding journey of mother and baby.

Lifestyle Impact:

I will now discuss lifestyle impacts. Mollborn *et al.* (2014) state lifestyle as being patterns of behaviour from choices and options available to people through life. While breastfeeding has numerous advantages for children impacting lifelong health and wellbeing parents experience external factors that influence taking it up. Bronfenbrenner (1979) and his idea of ecological systems can be used when demonstrating attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about breastfeeding that directly impact experiences and opportunities for infants that promote health, wellbeing and healthier lifestyles. According to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

(2021) Within the United Kingdom there are policies and guidelines in place such as the 'Healthy Child Programme' supported by the UNICEF UK (2019) and article 3 that states the best interest of the child must be priority when making decisions that affect the child, in relation to breastfeeding this mean ensuring we are giving children the opportunity to the best start in life and promoting healthy foundations for future outcomes. However, workplace pressures such as short parental leave, limited breastfeeding spaces affecting being able to continue established breastfeeding longer term swaying decisions to not start it.

When exploring lifestyle Sweden breastfeeding rates are some of the highest and this can be attributed to its generous parental policy that according to Campa (2024) allows 480 days and encourages fathers to take leave fostering supportive environments in contrast UK policies according to GOV.UK (2025) entitles 273days paid maternity leave contribution to short breastfeeding journeys if at all.

Guidelines and polices influence decision around feeding preference. Mothers face external factors such as needing to return to work, breastfeeding friendly policies, societal attitudes and perceptions around breastfeeding, lack of knowledge and understanding about the benefits and how to overcome the challenges that breastfeeding has. Dalgren and Whites' model of the social determinants of health and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system highlight society and environmental context having impacts on our lifestyles. Even influencing those crucial natural biologicals system in promoting laying foundations to generational health. and answer why other communities with well established and traditional norm around breastfeeding do well in this around adopting police and guidelines

Role of Multiagency work:

NICE (2025) emphasize the United Kingdom has one of the lowest birth rates compared to others in Europe. UNICEF UK (2017) highlight there are various contributing factors for this, despite the current research and evidence that highlights breastfeeding saves lives and protects the health and wellbeing of infants giving the best possible start in life. I will now highlight a few contributing factors that need to be addressed through multiagency:

- Formula marketing – WHO and UNICEF (2022) highlight the unethical marketing of formula that manipulate parents into believing formula is as

equally as good as breastmilk, shifting perceptions that breastfeeding is hard and that formula is more convenient and beneficial. Tackling and placing stricter guideline around this can ensure parents are making well informed decisions regarding feeding and the impact this has for the health, well-being and lifestyle children.

- Lack of education – Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (2023) emphasize more needs to be done in school to promote breastfeeding within education for children due to the low breastfeeding representations in the communities in which children are currently living especially in the UK. This challenges the change in social norms through quality education and information shaping our future parents.
- Lack of support – Steurer (2017) highlight support in the form of more sustainable factors to support breastfeeding in longer maternity leave, adequate time and space for returning breastfeeding mothers to work and inconsistency in policies and lack of enforcement. Furthermore, Cook *et al.* (2021) highlight maternal confidence and motivation and concerns over pain and lack of milks and the need for more practical support for positioning, and attachment techniques as professional health support is not always followed through. Furthermore, Srivasta *et al.* (2022) highlight that improvements need to be made in antenatal services that provide information about breastfeeding and promote realistically to woman to encourage them to opt into breastfeeding even before birth.

Conclusion:

In conclusion breastfeeding offers both short and long terms outcomes for health, well-being and lifestyle for infants, promoting healthy nutritional habits, reducing the risk health concerns and disease and laying foundations to emotional and social development. However currently in the United Kingdom more need to be done to develop policies and guidelines equip families with support and knowledge needed to encourage successful breastfeeding journeys. A huge role is to be played by Health and Education to support a shift in changing perceptions, social norms and providing high quality education to advocate for giving all infant the best start in life,

Thank you for joining today's discussion. I hope you enjoyed my presentation specifically addressing early childhood nutrition with a focus on breastfeeding. I hope to see you again, Hwyl Fawr/Goodbye.

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