

Well-being, Care and Healthy living

Introduction

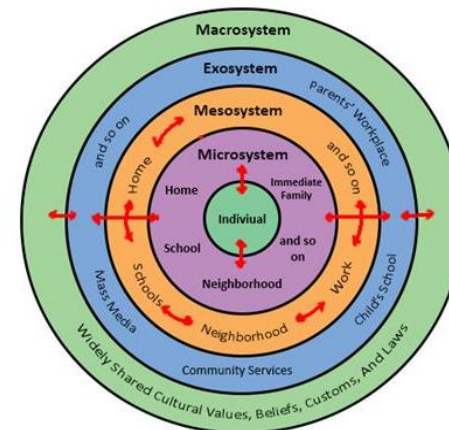
This poster will explore health, well being and lifestyle and the importance for children in early years, with focus on the implications of these on the outcomes for children . The poster will look at key theorists surrounding overall health and well being and explore curriculum and pedagogy and how it aims to support children holistically to meet their needs. The poster will explore relationships surrounding the children and the impact these relationships have on the children's ability to make healthy choices and explore how child led play impacts on well being.

Health

According to the World Health Organisation [hereafter WHO] (2024), being healthy is a fundamental right that encompasses good physical, mental and social well-being and states good health sets the foundations for the future, stating the importance of basic health for children and how it can have lasting effects on their outcomes. This is underpinned by UNICEF (2019) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC] article 24 that states every child has the right to high quality health care and that the Government are responsible and must keep children healthy. Similarly, Musgrave (2017) suggests being healthy is to live without illness with the stability of physical and mental health and describes holistic health as being physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Mormot (2010) would agree and states foundations for health are established in early childhood and points out the importance of children's physical, intellectual and emotional development and claims lasting effects such as obesity, heart disease, mental health and educational achievement are some of the outcomes for children who do not have this basic health need met. This runs in the veins of theorist Maslow (1943), whose hierarchy of needs describes health as safety and security claiming that children must have this basic need to move towards self actualisation later in life and points out the importance of how achieving these can have an impact on development resulting in under achievement in different aspects of life. This view is supported by Maholmes (2014) who suggests living in poverty can have a detrimental impact on children's overall health and states these children will have poorer general health including mental health and can suffer from anxiety and depression. The author points out the benefits of early intervention for these children and suggest educating parents on the importance of good health can impact the children. This concept lends itself to Vygotsky and his theory that children learn not from isolation but from social interactions within their environment such as, parents, friends and teachers (Miller, 2011). The Welsh Government (2024) child poverty strategy for Wales state 28% of children are currently living in poverty in Wales and aim to tackle child poverty over the next ten years. In line with these findings, the Welsh Government (2022) healthy child Wales strategy aims to support families living in deprived communities by supporting and educating them to make healthy choices and suggest that parents have the most influence over how their children live and the healthy choices they make. The Government aim to offer these interventions to families with children between the ages of 0-7 years old as they suggest this as the most critical time for development and to lay the foundations for better health in the future. This runs in the veins of Welsh Government (2024) Curriculum for Wales and one of the areas for learning. The pedagogy teaches children to be healthy and confident individuals and supports them in settings to make good choices. For example, making physical education fun and learning about different foods. One scheme that has been adopted by schools and supports children to be more active is the Daily Mile Foundation (2018), the scheme was founded by Elaine Wylie and her aim was to improve physical, social, emotional, mental and overall wellbeing of children. According to Musgrave (2017) the social model of health can support practitioners in early years to support children's holistic health and state knowing the circumstances of children can help them to support the children's overall health. Influencing factors such as education would align with Bronfenbrenner (1977) whose theory suggests children learn from interconnected systems and interactions and describes the microsystem that includes family and school as being the most influential in children's lives. In the same vein and showing similarities is Dahlgren and Whitehead (2021) model of health that states health is determined by factors such as, lifestyle, social and community, structural and socioeconomic and suggest that children's health such as good nutrition is the responsibility of the parent. However, point out that healthy food may not be available for all children based on socio-economic groups and environment.



(Getty Images, 2025)

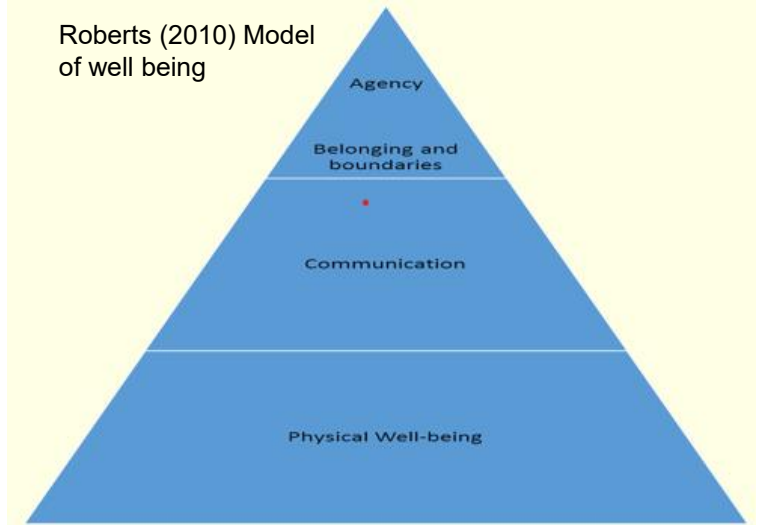


(Cormac 404, 2017)

Wellbeing

According to Berlinski and Schady (2015) well being can be defined as being happy and prosperous and suggests that the foundations for children's well being happen before birth and point out that as children develop through the ups and downs of life there can be a lack of development that can cause implications for the child's well being throughout their life. Similarly, Bradshaw (2016) suggests that while there are definite links between well being and future outcomes for children, he does however point out that well being can be subjective and mean different things to different people. Howard (2020) would agree and argues that children's well being should be a whole family approach and children should be taught resilience from a young age to help them problem solve later in life, creating more well adjusted, emotionally ready children. This is underpinned by the UNCRC article 24 that states children have the right to receive adequate health care that includes the overall well being of the child (UNICEF, 2019). Roberts (2010) states the importance of children's well being and suggests that children need to build positive relationships to help them develop and need love, care, warmth and nurture to thrive. Similarly, Mainstone- Cotton (2017) would agree and suggests children need to feel love, safety and self love to be able to navigate their lives showing resilience and points out the importance of positive relationships and the influence they can have on children and their lives. Roberts (2010) model of wellbeing shares similarities to Maslow hierarchy of needs and shows physical well being at the bottom of the pyramid, the model suggests effective communication can help to create positive relationships and help children gain an understanding of boundaries creating a sense of belonging, achieving agency, which according to Roberts allows children to make sense of the world around them. In the same vein, Thoilliez (2011) state children experience happiness when they are immersed in play with others and suggests these relationships impact overall well being. These views are supported by theorist Bowlby (2004) and his attachment theory that states children need to create secure attachments to feel safe and create bonds to have healthy development and well being. Manning-Morton (2014) suggest children who have created such bonds will portray well being in many ways such as showing enthusiasm, showing confidence and expressing themselves with ease, showing empathy, trust and affection and be able to take risks. Manning-Morton suggest curious and engaged children learn through making mistakes during play and need to be supported by practitioners in an enabling environment. This is consistent with Ryff (2016) who suggests the importance of positive experiences in early years and states children's well being is made up of interconnected components. Her model of psychological wellbeing consists of six components that support overall mental and emotional well being. According to Johnson (2016) children have an intrinsic need to play and must be given the time to explore their surroundings to make sense of the world around them. Similarly, Mainstone-Cotton (2017) would agree and states that children's experiences can empower them and suggests they must be given the space to validate their own experiences using all their senses. For example, feeling the bark on tree or the sand between their toes. She points out that children who are given the time to become immersed in play will have better overall well being. This runs in the veins of Reggio Emilia (2022), whose child centred international approach promotes curiosity and freedom to play to help support children's overall well being. The Welsh Government (2024) curriculum for Wales aims to support children holistically and shares that one of the four purposes of the curriculum is to create healthy, confident individuals and state practitioners must help children to build on their mental and emotional well being. They suggest practitioners must enable the children by creating enabling and safe environments and promote positive relationships with a focus on child led play. However, according to Bradshaw (2016), despite best efforts state that statistics show the United Kingdom ranked 14th out of 15 countries when comparing children's well being.

Roberts (2010) Model of well being



(Sage, 2025)

Carol Ryff's Model of Psychological well being

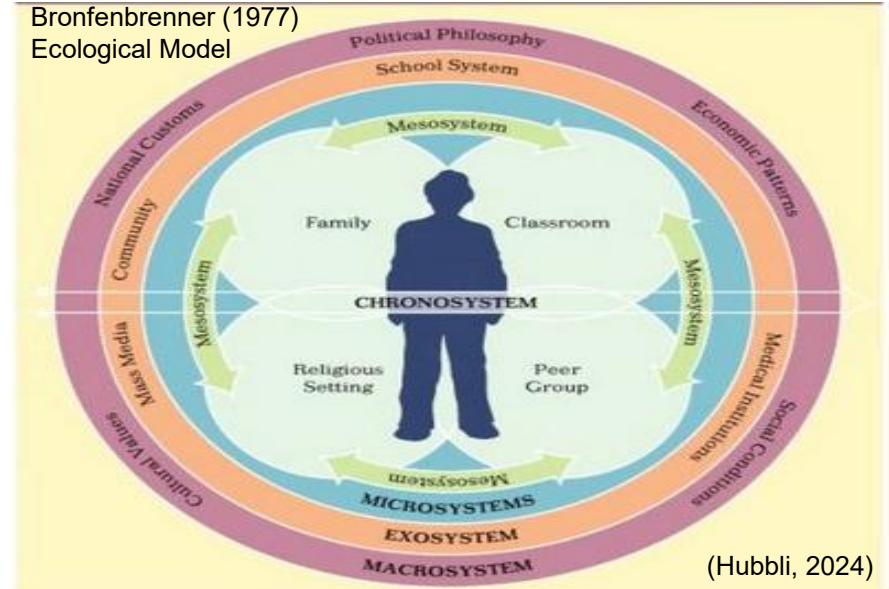


(University of applied science, 2020)

Lifestyles

The World Health Organisation [hereafter WHO] (2024) defines a healthy lifestyle that encompasses good physical, mental and social well being and suggest having a healthy lifestyle can minimise the risk of serious illness later in life. Similarly, Barnardo's (2024) state a healthy lifestyle for children is having a good balance of food, positive hygiene and exercise and good physical, including mental health and suggest children must have positive relationships enforced with food and health from a young age to remain healthy. According to Berlinski and Schady (2015) families are the most influential and contributing factor to how children live their lives and suggests parents have the power to decide what to feed their children, they have control over the environment in which the children grow up in and they decide how much exercise their children have. Both authors point out that these early decisions made by parents can have a lasting effect on how children develop and can shape the way they go on to live their lives. Maholmes (2014) highlights that there is a clear link between parents and poorer health for children living in poverty and suggests these children are more likely to suffer mental illness such as depression. In the same vein, Bradshaw (2016) states poverty has a negative effect on children's lifestyle and can have a negative impact on where children live, such as overcrowded housing, personal hygiene including dental, obesity due to inadequate nutrition and illness due to poor quality of life. To tackle childhood poverty the Welsh Government (2025) healthy eating scheme offer children in primary schools in Wales free school meals to help children improve their health and develop healthy eating habits. Thomas and Lewis (2016) state developing such habits will help the children's way of thinking about food and help keep them motivated to eating healthy. According to Wilson (2016) partnership working is essential to create bonds and links between the setting and school and suggests practitioners will be able to share information with parents and be able to encourage them by modelling healthy lifestyles. This is underpinned by the Welsh Government (2017) Flying Start provision that values partnerships by offering parenting support to help educate families on healthy lifestyle choices and offer support to help create better outcomes for the children. Furthermore, the Welsh Government (2024) state that practitioners must promote physical activity, teach children about the importance of having a balanced diet, personal care and hygiene. The Welsh Government state that children need to be aware of the implications of not looking after themselves and understand how good health can have a positive effect on well being. For example, schools can invite parents in to participate in sports day to help promote physical health. These influences and the importance of partnership working runs in the veins of Bronfenbrenner (1977) ecological model for children's development that show the child at the centre layered by the different systems. The most immediate being the Microsystem that's shows the importance of relationships such as parents, school and friends and the influence they have on the child's overall development and well being.

Bronfenbrenner (1977)
Ecological Model



Conclusion

This poster closely examined health, well being and lifestyles and their impact on children in early years. The poster explored what it means to be healthy and how it impacts children's lives and looked at how health has links with both well being and lifestyle, exploring the best possible outcomes for children. The poster used models and theorists to underpin how health, well being and lifestyle impact children and their future and looked at close relationships and how they support development. Furthermore, the poster showed that child led play helped to develop such relationships and showed the importance play has on how children develop holistically. All the evidence in this poster clearly points out that all areas are interconnected.

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