

What is Health, Well-Being and Lifestyle?

Introduction

This poster examines the interconnected concepts of health, well-being, and lifestyle, emphasizing their importance in early childhood development and their role in promoting holistic growth. It explores key definitions, underscores their significance, and discusses the crucial role of Early Years practitioners in fostering these elements. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a positive concept that highlights social and personal resources, underscoring the connection between health and emotional well-being (WHO, 1986). This definition suggests that emotional well-being depends on positive social interactions with others and is also tied to our relationship with ourselves. This highlights the importance of fostering self-reliance and resilience in children, emphasizing the role of practitioners in supporting these aspects of development (Musgrave, 2017).

Health, well-being, and lifestyle are closely interconnected concepts that significantly influence early childhood development (Cheung, 2018). These elements can be likened to the fire triangle, where changes in one directly impact the others. This poster explores these interconnections, underscores their importance for young children, and incorporates their perspectives. It also emphasizes the critical role of Early Years practitioners in nurturing these dimensions. Musgrave (2017) notes that an individual's understanding of health and well-being is often shaped by personal experiences, which may offer only a limited perspective. However, within the early years sector, practitioners have a unique opportunity to develop a broader, more comprehensive understanding by promoting and maintaining children's health while also learning from and sharing insights with one another.

Health

Concepts

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1948), health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This definition highlights the body's ability to perform daily functions, supported by proper nutrition, regular physical activity, adequate rest, and access to medical care. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, shaping how children think, feel, and act. Hong, Ra, and Jang (2015) support this perspective, emphasizing that a child's perception of happiness is essential for leading a fulfilling life. However, defining health is complex, as interpretations vary across different socio-cultural contexts (Rose, Gilbert, & Richards, 2016). Musgrave (2017) echoes this sentiment, suggesting that no single, universally accepted definition exists. The WHO's updated perspective (1998) expands on its original definition, describing health as the ability to realize aspirations, meet needs, cope with change, and manage one's environment. This view positions health as a resource for everyday life rather than an ultimate goal, emphasizing social and personal resources alongside physical capabilities. Musgrave (2017) acknowledges this definition as ambitious, as it seeks to provide an inclusive framework applicable across diverse contexts.

Impact on Early Years Development

Healthy development in early childhood lays the foundation for children's readiness and success in early years settings and future educational experiences (Currie, 2005). Currie (2005) also highlights that early life stress and adverse events can have lasting effects on children's mental and physical health. Specifically, early life stress can lead to developmental delays and negatively impact long-term health outcomes (Developing Child, 2010; Noble, Candliss, & Farah, 2007). Early childhood development and education programs play a crucial role in reducing educational disparities. For instance, *Flying Start*, a Welsh Government-funded initiative, provides support services for families with children under four in disadvantaged areas of Wales (Welsh Government, 2017). Positive early experiences are essential for building a child's brain architecture, forming the foundation for lifelong learning and skill development. The period from pregnancy to age three is particularly critical, as the brain is most sensitive to environmental influences during this time (UNICEF, n.d.). The Institute of Early Years Education (2024) emphasizes that a healthy, balanced diet in early childhood promotes growth, supports brain development, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases. They also highlight that, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, n.d.), good nutrition is a fundamental human right. This includes access to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and education to support a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, maternal health before and during pregnancy significantly impacts foetal health and brain development (WHO, 2020).

Role of Practitioner

The role of the Early Years practitioner is multifaceted, encompassing the responsibility of ensuring a safe and engaging physical environment. This includes facilitating both indoor and outdoor play opportunities and designing activities that support children's development of core strength, balance, and coordination. Practitioners also play a key role in promoting healthy eating by providing nutritious meals and snacks or offering guidance on balanced diets. Additionally, they encourage regular physical activity through structured and unstructured play (Department for Education, 2024; DfE, n.d.; McGowan, Chandler, & Gerde, 2023). High-quality childcare programs, such as *Flying Start*, support skill development, socialization, and children's ability to focus and play. Designed to address poverty and deprivation, *Flying Start* is a key initiative in implementing early years programs (Welsh Government, 2017). Moreover, practitioners are expected to exemplify healthy behaviours by demonstrating good hygiene practices, actively participating in physical activities, and modelling positive social interactions (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021; DfE, 2010).

Concepts

Well-being is a broad concept encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health. It reflects a state in which children build resilience, manage stress, and reach their potential. With emotional, social, and physical dimensions, well-being is fundamental to quality of life. Core elements include emotional stability, life satisfaction, positive relationships, and a sense of purpose.

Musgrave (2017) highlights that well-being is defined from multiple perspectives, including philosophical, economic, psychological, and health-related viewpoints. Statham and Chase (2010) define well-being as quality of life based on objective measures such as health. Rose, Gilbert, and Richards (2016) acknowledge the challenges in defining well-being, citing Pollard and Lee's (2002) five domains—physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and economic—which align with NICE's (2012) emotional, psychological, and social categories. Key components such as happiness, resilience, and emotional regulation further contribute to the concept of well-being.

Dodge *et al.* (2012) offer a dynamic definition of well-being, drawing on various theories. Headey and Wearing (1989) describe well-being as a balance of stable traits and situational changes, while Cummins (2010) emphasizes the impact of life challenges on homeostasis. Hendry and Kloep (2002) propose a lifespan model, considering well-being as an evolving process. Dodge *et al.* (2012) ultimately argue that well-being is best understood as a state of equilibrium, continuously shaped by life events and challenges.

[Image source: [Toddeasyeasy: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)]



Well-Being

Impact on Early Years Development

John Bowlby's attachment theory and research on early relationships and mental health highlight the significance of early experiences in shaping emotional well-being, resilience, and stress management. His work demonstrates that the emotional bond between a child and their primary caregivers is fundamental to emotional development and mental health (HM Government, 2016; NSPCC Learning, 2021).

Research by Sciaraffa, Zeanah, and Zeanah (2018) emphasizes that toxic stress, particularly from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), can physically alter brain development. Preventing these stressors is therefore crucial. Masten and Barnes (2018) support this view, noting that resilience science is gaining attention due to increasing concerns about the long-term effects of ACEs on development.

A stable emotional environment enhances cognitive functions and learning abilities. Ursache, Blair, and Raver (2012) explored the relationship between cognitive regulation and emotional reactivity, demonstrating how attention and physiological stress responses influence a child's ability to manage emotions and focus on learning.

Positive social interactions foster communication skills and empathy, while a sense of community enhances self-esteem and security. A nurturing environment is essential for promoting emotional well-being and development. Furthermore, positive social interactions help children develop emotional regulation and social skills, which are critical for forming healthy relationships and a strong sense of self (Musgrave, 2017; Roberts, 2010; Bradshaw, 2016).

Role of Practitioner

Understanding their own well-being helps practitioners recognize its importance for the children in their care (DfE, n.d.). Laevers (1994) defines children's well-being through qualities such as openness, confidence, self-esteem, vitality, and inner peace, linking high well-being to improved learning. This underscores the connection between emotional health and education. Practitioners can support well-being by creating safe, predictable environments and fostering trusting relationships.

Roberts (2010) emphasizes the importance of relationships, particularly the role of key persons in building strong connections with children and families while being mindful of family well-being. This dual focus promotes both emotional and overall development. Teaching emotional regulation and providing opportunities for children to express their feelings is sometimes necessary. Practitioners can help manage stress and anxiety by being attentive and intervening when needed (Rose, Gilbert, & Richards, 2016; Ursache, Blair, & Raver, 2011). A nurturing environment that supports emotional expression, regulation, and positive social interactions aligns with Vygotsky's theory, fostering both emotional and cognitive growth (Roberts, 2010; Rose, Gilbert, & Richards, 2016).



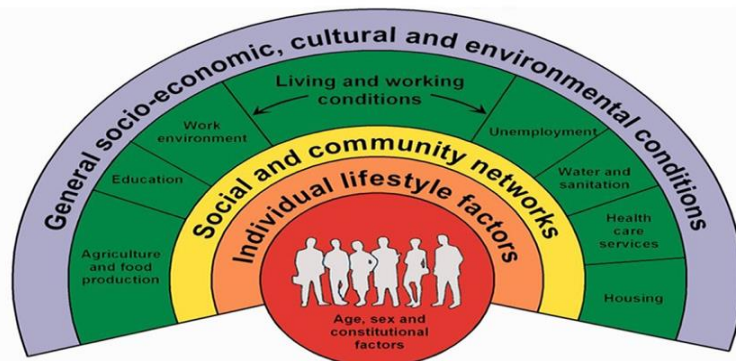
Credit: Mariam Mahmood

Concept

Lifestyle represents a way of living that reflects one's attitudes, habits, and values. For children, a healthy lifestyle includes proper nutrition, regular physical activity, sufficient sleep, and positive social interactions. Key factors influencing lifestyle include diet, exercise, sleep patterns, and recreational activities.

Lifestyle encompasses the habits, attitudes, and behaviours that shape overall health and well-being (Svenson & Halberg, 2011). The Welsh Government (2021) highlights that a person's lifestyle is influenced by multiple factors, including home environment, nutrition, financial situation, community influences, and parenting practices. Additionally, lifestyle is shaped by access to services, culture, work, and personal preferences.

Bagordo et al. (2017) emphasize that lifestyle choices made during childhood significantly impact long-term health and quality of life. According to the WHO (2024), many adult diseases can be prevented by identifying and modifying unhealthy behaviours early. Their research highlights the critical role of socio-economic status in shaping children's lifestyles, as it influences key health-related factors (Gautum et al., 2023; Bagordo et al., 2017). Furthermore, geographical location affects lifestyle choices, as environmental, cultural, and social conditions often dictate behaviours and opportunities (Warner, 2024; Rossello, 2025). For example, the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) notes that environmental, cultural, and social factors in different geographical locations significantly influence behaviours and opportunities (Warner, 2024). Additionally, research published in Preventive Medicine Daily discusses how geographic location impacts health by determining available food options and typical physical and social activities (Rossello, 2025).



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

Lifestyle

Impact on Early Years Development

Svenson and Hallberg (2011) discuss how lifestyle can be seen as either an independent variable, influencing unhealthy behaviours, or as a dependent variable, shaped by societal conditions. For example, children in urban areas might have more access to fast food, leading to unhealthy eating habits, whereas those in rural areas might have limited access to recreational facilities, affecting their physical activity levels. However, it is important to note that individual family practices can sometimes mitigate these broader societal influences (Morgan, 2011). The community and societal structures involved in raising a child play a crucial role during the early years. Tickell (2011) and Jirout *et al.* (2019) support this view, emphasizing that lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, and sleep hygiene significantly impact children's cognition and learning. Their research explored the relationships between nutrition, fitness, sleep, and broader cultural and socioeconomic influences, demonstrating how these factors intersect with cognitive development and educational outcomes.

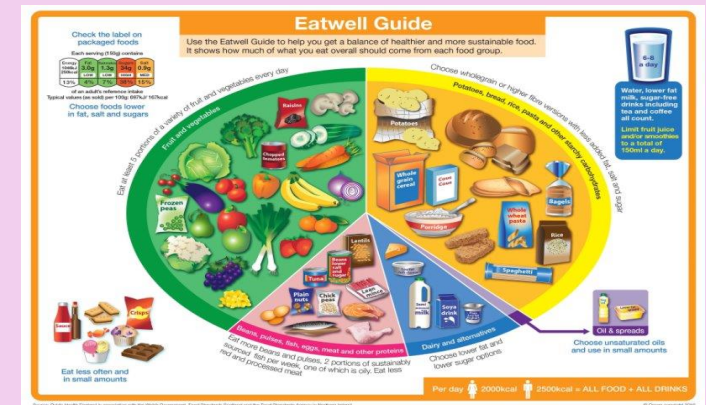
Encouraging healthy habits from an early age not only supports physical well-being but also fosters positive behaviours, instilling a lifelong appreciation for a balanced and healthy lifestyle (Vasundhara & Nagaraju, 2024). Community norms and expectations further shape lifestyle choices. For example, in communities where physical fitness is highly valued, individuals are more likely to adopt regular exercise routines and healthy eating habits (Wittels, 2020).

Role of Practitioner

Early Years practitioners collaborate with families to reinforce healthy habits at home by providing resources and guidance on nutrition and physical activity. For example, they may organize workshops for parents on preparing balanced meals and snacks. However, as highlighted by the DfE (2017), not all families have equal access to healthy food options, which can present challenges in implementing these practices effectively.

Practitioners promote healthy eating habits by offering balanced meals and snacks while encouraging regular physical activity through both structured and unstructured play (McGowan, Chandler, & Gerde, 2023). However, some children may have dietary restrictions or physical limitations that require tailored approaches to ensure inclusivity and accessibility (Public Health Wales, 2020).

By demonstrating healthy behaviours, practitioners serve as role models for children. This includes actively participating in physical activities, such as joining in a game of tag, and making nutritious food choices alongside the children. Engaging in these activities fosters a positive learning environment and encourages children to adopt similar habits. However, maintaining consistency in modelling these behaviours can be challenging due to practitioners' varying personal habits and preferences (Early Years Wales, 2021).



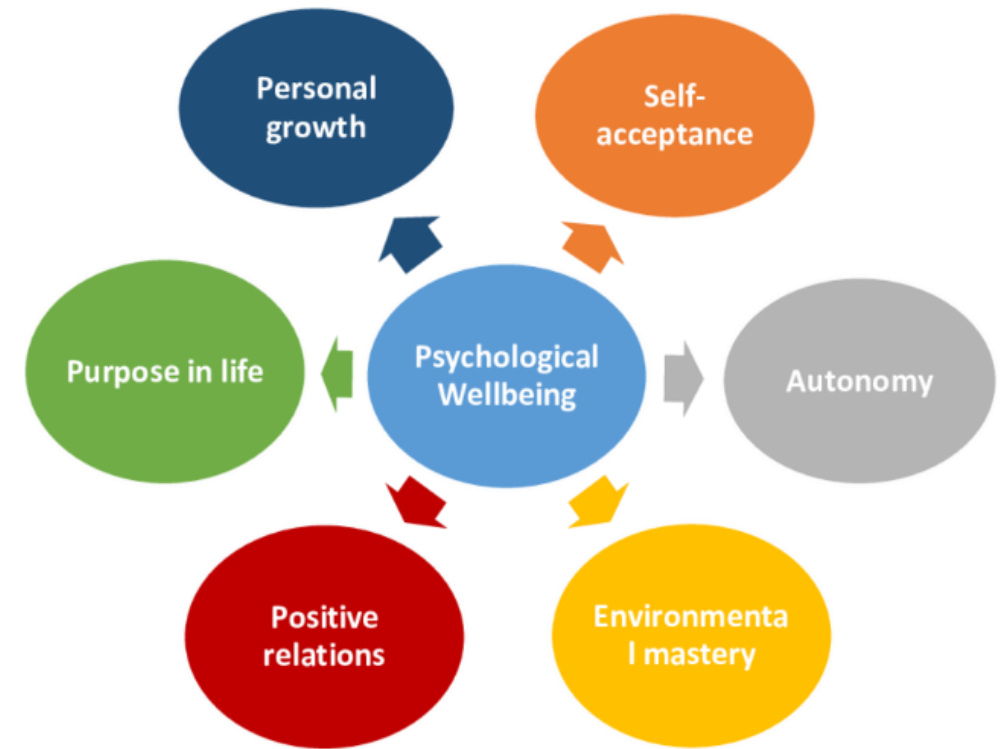
Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

Conclusion

Health, well-being, and lifestyle are deeply interconnected and play a fundamental role in early childhood development. A holistic approach that considers physical, mental, and emotional well-being is essential in fostering resilience, cognitive growth, and overall life satisfaction (Musgrave, 2017; Rose, Gilbert, & Richards, 2016). The early years are a critical period for establishing healthy habits, as factors such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and social interactions significantly impact a child's development (Bagordo et al., 2017; Tickell, 2011; Jirout et al., 2019).

Early Years practitioners play a crucial role in promoting and maintaining children's well-being by creating supportive environments, acting as role models, and collaborating with families to reinforce healthy behaviours (DfE, 2017; McGowan, Chandler, & Gerde, 2023). However, challenges such as socio-economic disparities and accessibility to resources can affect the implementation of these practices (Public Health Wales, 2020; Welsh Government, 2021).

By adopting an inclusive and proactive approach, practitioners can help shape positive long-term outcomes for children, ensuring they develop the foundations for lifelong health and well-being. Understanding and addressing the diverse influences on a child's lifestyle, including environmental and socio-economic factors, is key to fostering equitable and sustainable early years development (Warner, 2024; Rossello, 2025).



The Six factor Model of Wellbeing from Carol Ryff (One Percent Wisdom, 2024).

Health and Well-being in Early Years Development – A Focus on Mental Health

My name is Julie MacDonald, and in this presentation, I will explore an important topic—mental health in young children—and its impact on their well-being, care, and healthy living. Mental health is just as important as physical health, yet it often does not receive the same attention (WHO, 2022). The Department for Education (2023) explains that much like physical health, mental well-being can fluctuate over time due to a range of factors, such as chronic illnesses or poor nutrition, as discussed by Firth *et al.* (2020). In young children, mental health is linked to their emotional and social development, shaping their ability to form relationships, manage emotions, and engage in learning. Mind (2017) further emphasizes that mental health is something everyone has, consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects, this is also supported by NSPCC (2024).

However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of mental health, there are significant gaps in the provision of mental health services for young children in the UK and Wales. According to Public Health Wales (2023), the number of children and young people experiencing mental health problems is increasing, yet mental health services are not expanding quickly enough to meet this rising demand. This, they believe, has left many children with limited or no support, particularly in socioeconomically deprived areas where the need is often greatest.

Critics argue that while policies and initiatives have been introduced, such as the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010, as discussed by the Social Health and Research Network (SHRN) (2022), implementation has been inconsistent. For example, the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2025) highlighted that almost three-quarters of children and young people in the lowest affluence category worry about their mental health, indicating a disparity in access to mental health support.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing mental health challenges among young children. School closures and social isolation had significant impact on their emotional and social development. A study by the School Health Research Network found that the average mental well-being of 11 to 16-year-olds in Wales declined during the pandemic and that anxiety in children starting their education journey is higher than before the pandemic (WG, 2022). This underscores the need for more robust mental health support systems that can adapt to such crises and their long-term impact.

Recognising Mental Health Struggles in Young Children

Identifying mental health issues in young children is not always straightforward. The NSPCC (2022) reports that children may struggle to express their emotions or concerns, making it difficult for caregivers to recognize when they need support. According to Every Mind Matters (NHS, n.d.), warning signs of mental health difficulties in children include withdrawal from activities they once enjoyed, changes in behaviours such as increased aggression or extreme mood swings, loss of interest in social interactions, self-harm or neglect, and disruptions to sleeping patterns. This, according to Statham *et al.* (2010), highlights that mental health is a complex combination of physical, emotional, and social elements. Action for Children (2024) points out the importance of open communication, encouraging both children and adults to express their emotions rather than waiting until their mental health is suffering is necessary to avoid it reaching a crisis point.

However, recognizing these signs can be particularly challenging in young children who may not have the vocabulary or self-awareness to articulate their feelings. Public Health Wales (2022) highlighted that mental health issues among children are often underreported and undertreated, especially in deprived areas. This disparity in recognition and treatment underscores the need for better training for caregivers and educators to identify and support children with mental health needs.

Additionally, the stigma surrounding mental health can also prevent families from seeking help. A report by the Children's Commissioner for Wales found that many parents and caregivers are reluctant to acknowledge mental health issues due to fear of judgment or misunderstanding (SHRN, 2022). This reluctance can delay early intervention, which is beneficial for effective treatment and support.

On the other hand, when children experience positive mental well-being, they are more likely to feel comfortable, engage in play, and build strong relationships (Play Wales, 2024). The Children's Society (2020) identifies key factors that children associate with happiness, including positive relationships, opportunities for play, good health, education, and a sense of security. Similarly, Laevers' concept of well-being suggested that physical needs, affection, warmth, recognition, self-belief, and moral values are fundamental to emotional stability (Laevers, 1994; Roberts, 2010).

In Wales, initiatives such as the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* aim to improve the mental well-being of children by promoting a holistic approach (Health and Care Research Wales, 2023a). This includes ensuring that children have access to safe play environments, supportive educational settings, and community resources that foster positive mental health.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Supporting Well-being in Early Childhood

To better understand how mental health can be nurtured in young children, we can look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Maslow's theory explains that human needs must be met in a specific order, from basic survival needs to emotional and psychological well-being. Physiological needs such as proper nutrition, rest, and a safe environment support brain and body development (Bagordo *et al.*, 2017). Safety and security are also considered essential, as a stable and predictable routine provides children with emotional safety, reducing anxiety and stress (Tickell, 2011). Love and belonging are fundamental, as strong relationships with caregivers and peers promote emotional resilience (Bowlby, 1969). The DfE (2024b) echo Bowlby's theory stating when children feel valued, their confidence and independence grow. Helping to provide a solid foundation of well-being allowing them to reach their full potential, exploring creativity and learning. If any of these levels are disrupted, however, — such as neglect, poverty, or lack of emotional support—mental health can suffer, as Waterman (2024) offers, when a child's esteem needs are not met, self-actualization becomes difficult, impacting their long-term potential.

On the other hand, critics argue that Maslow's theory, while influential, can be overly simplistic and does not account for the complex, dynamic nature of human needs. For instance, in the context of early childhood education, the Welsh Government's Early Childhood Play, Learning, and Care Plan (2024b) emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to child development, which includes not only meeting basic needs but also fostering a nurturing and stimulating environment (WG, 2024b). This approach aligns with Maslow's theory but also highlights the need for flexibility and adaptability in addressing children's needs.

In practice, educators and caregivers are encouraged to create environments that support all aspects of a child's development. This includes providing nutritious meals, ensuring safe and secure settings, and fostering positive relationships through consistent and caring interactions (WG, 2025). The Welsh Government's commitment to early childhood well-being aims to improve the mental and physical health of children by promoting sustainable and inclusive practices (WG, 2015).

Moreover, the impact of socioeconomic factors on children's well-being cannot be overlooked. Research by Public Health Wales indicates that children from lower-income families are more likely to experience disruptions in their basic needs, which can hinder their overall development (WG, 2024b). Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions and support systems that ensure all children, regardless of their background, have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory: The Role of Environment in Mental Health

In addition to individual needs, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) as echoed by El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022), highlight how a child's well-being is influenced by various levels of their environment and links to their belonging at school. The microsystem which includes family, teachers, and peers, directly shapes a child's mental health (Roberts, 2010). For example, the positive interactions with teachers can boost a child's self-esteem and sense of security.

However, it is important to note that not all children have equal access to supportive microsystems. Disparities in educational resources and family support can significantly impact a child's mental health (PHE, 2020). For instance, children from lower-income families may face additional stressors such as financial instability and limited access to extracurricular activities, which can hinder their emotional and social development.

The mesosystem refers to relationships between home, school, and community settings, which reinforce stability and support (DfE, 2017). In Wales, initiatives like the NEST framework aim to create a cohesive support system for children fostering collaboration between the different sectors, like education, health, and social services (PHW, 2023). This holistic approach helps ensure that children receive consistent support across various environments.

The exosystem consists of factors such as a parent's job, financial stress, or access to healthcare, all of which indirectly impact a child's well-being (PHW, 2020). For example, parental job loss or financial difficulties can lead to increased stress at home, affecting a child's sense of security and stability as Public Health Wales identified as being a significant factor contributing to mental health disparities among children (Health Care Research Wales, 2023b).

The macrosystem represents social attitudes toward mental health awareness and child development, which can influence the availability of support (WG, 2024). In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on mental health awareness, with campaigns and policies aimed at reducing stigma and promoting early intervention as shared by Eriksson, Ghazinour, and Hammarström, (2018) stating the *Wellbeing Act 2015* prioritizes mental health as a key component of overall well-being.

The chronosystem involves life events such as family illness, parental separation, or global crises like COVID-19, which can affect children's long-term emotional well-being (Mind, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on children's mental health, with increased reports of anxiety, depression, and social isolation. A study by the School Health Research Network for the WG (2024a) found that the mental well-being of children in Wales declined significantly during the pandemic.

By considering all these influences, we see that mental health is not just an individual issue—it is shaped by social and environmental factors, and therefore addressing these factors requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy changes, community support, and targeted interventions to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive.

The Effects of Poor Mental Health on Children

Poor mental health can have both short- and long-term consequences. Girotti, Bulin, and Carreno (2024) explain that chronic stress can disrupt cognitive development, leading to issues such as anxiety and behavioural difficulties, like children who experience chronic stress struggling with concentration and memory. As children who face poverty, limited social interaction, or unstable home environments are at greater risk, as featured by Francis *et al.* (2018). Additionally, NHS Wales (2020) reports that adverse childhood experiences, can lead to low selfworth and poor mental health outcomes. Consequently, Bhui *et al.* (2022) note that 70% of children by the age of eight have experienced at least one adverse event, which can have lasting negative effects on their emotional and psychological well-being. However, it is important to recognize that the impact of poor mental health is not uniform across all children. In the UK, children from deprived areas are disproportionately affected. Public Health Wales (2022) highlights that children living in the most deprived areas are almost twice as likely to experience mental health crises compared to those in the least deprived areas. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to support vulnerable populations.

Moreover, the effects of chronic stress on cognitive development are profound, leading to chemical and structural changes in the brain, affecting the regulation of emotions and stress. For instance, as shared by the National Education Union (2023), trauma can impair the connections in the brain, affecting emotional regulation and memory function. This can result in diminished executive functioning, such as lower academic achievement and shorter attention spans (NEU, 2023).

In Wales, nearly half of all adults reported experiencing at least one ACE during their childhood, with 14% experiencing four or more (PHW, 2018). These experiences can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including poor mental health, lower educational attainment, and an increased likelihood of engaging in health-harming behaviours (PHW, 2018). The Welsh Government (2024c) has prioritized addressing ACEs through initiatives like the ACE Support Hub, which aims to raise awareness and provide support to mitigate the impacts of childhood adversity.

The Role of Practitioners in Supporting Mental Health

As early years practitioners, we play a role in promoting positive mental health. Creating safe and nurturing environments with stability, routine, and secure attachments supports children's emotional development (Girotti, Bulin, and Carreno, 2024), like establishing a consistent daily schedule which may help children feel more secure and reduce their anxiety.

However, it is important to recognize that creating such environments requires adequate resources and training. There is a growing concern that early years settings are underfunded, limiting the ability of practitioners to provide the necessary support, as the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) (2024) highlight, stating many nurseries are struggling financially, which can impact the quality of care and support they can offer.

Rose, Gilbert, & Richards, (2016) believe practitioners should be encouraging emotional literacy and teaching children how to express and regulate emotions builds resilience. Programs like the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative in the UK have been effective in helping children develop these skills (Department for Education and Skills, 2008). Similarly, providing children with opportunities to engage in creative play, as discussed by Roberts (2010), can enhance emotional and cognitive development, providing an outlet for self-expression.

The role of practitioners also extends to working closely with families and other professionals to ensure that children receive the support they need. Collaborative efforts between educators, healthcare providers, and social workers can provide a comprehensive approach to addressing mental health issues. In Wales, the development of multi-agency partnerships has been instrumental in improving mental health services for children (WG, 2025). However, the effectiveness of these partnerships depends on the availability of resources and the commitment of all stakeholders to prioritize children's mental health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mental health is a crucial aspect of early years development that affects children's overall well-being and future success. Theories like Maslow and Bronfenbrenner provide valuable frameworks for understanding the complex factors that influence children's mental health. The increasing prevalence of mental health challenges in young children, particularly in areas of deprivation, highlights the need for targeted interventions and robust support systems. Practitioners, families, and communities must work together to ensure that children receive the care, resources, and emotional support they need to thrive. By addressing mental health early, we can lay the foundation for a healthier, more resilient generation of young people.

Thank you.

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