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AI GUIDANCE

1. I confirm that i have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm i have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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Hyperlink for POSTER

[Recap: Meeting with Helen Wright \(2416677\) Saturday, June 14](#)

Section 2 SCRIPT PRESENTATION

Student number 2416677 Helen Wright module wellbeing, care and healthy living ECEY5009.

Today I will be discussing the Implications of Obesity within the early years and what implications this can cause on Health, Well-being and lifestyle. As previously mentioned, these concepts are all interconnected as a healthy lifestyle leads to good health, which fosters good well-being, creating a cycle that improves quality of life. Gray *et al.*, (2018) suggest that early interventions can be effective in reducing childhood obesity. Childhood obesity is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health (Chung, 2018). According to a study carried out in 2010 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) 81% of children aged between 11-17 did not meet the minimum recommended exercise requirements. The importance of early intervention is paramount to reduce the prevalence of obesity Goisis *et al.*, (2015) believe that studies have shown that childhood obesity can begin from the early stages of childhood and that income and other socioeconomic inequalities play a critical role in influencing a child's outcome. Gray *et al.*, (2018) also claim that socioeconomic status along with parental education has been shown to influence obesity in children from an early age. These early life influences could potentially have a detrimental effect throughout a child's life. To reduce the inequalities in childhood obesity policy makers should target disadvantage areas where families have very little knowledge on nutrition and healthy lifestyles by delivering interventions and guidance to these families. The Welsh Government (2013) believes in the importance of healthy food and drink in schools and the positive contribution it can make to giving children a healthy balanced diet and encouraging them to develop healthy eating habits. They issued guidance in 2009 to local authorities to address the need to maintain healthy eating within schools. The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 were made under this power and came into force on 2 September 2013. However, this focuses on school aged children and does not address all settings, especially childcare settings. The Child Measurement Programme for 2017 shows that around a quarter of children, 27.4% aged between 4-5 years old, are classified as overweight or obese in Wales. The Child Measurement Programme is a national surveillance programme which examines the height and weight annually of reception aged children throughout Wales. To address the need for early intervention, Early years Wales, (2020) has

launched new guidance specifically aimed at childcare settings in Wales. The guidance has been created due to an increasing number of overweight children along with limited knowledge of nutritional needs and the benefits they possess. The early years can have a positive impact on dietary preferences as children develop the ability to choose their own food. Children attending childcare settings from a young age may receive 90% of their meals and nutritional intake, especially if they are attending full time childcare. The recommendations are part of a range of Welsh government programs that aim to promote healthy eating habits in the early years and ensure that children attain and maintain a healthy weight as they grow and develop.

Public Health Wales, (2018) carried out detailed data from local authorities from around Wales on childhood obesity. The data highlighted that deprived areas such as Merthyr Tydfil showed that 15.6% of 4–5-year-olds were overweight or obese. Whereas less deprived areas such as Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire scored below 8%. However, data published in May 2025 shows children aged 4-5 years-old who have a healthy weight are now higher than ever before. 73.5% are currently in this category. Public Health Wales, (2025) points out that although the data looks promising, we are still, however, 11.8% higher in obesity levels than England and Scotland. The data published in May 2025 showed differences in children living with overweight and obesity between urban and rural areas. Public Health Wales highlights the need for more research in greater detail to address this issue and to provide a better understanding of what is required for future generations. Every Child Wales website is another initiative created by the Welsh Government. It provides resources for families and information on healthy eating habits from an early age. It also focuses on helping families understand and have a good relationship with food by providing meal ideas and nutritional advice on weaning during the early years. Public Health Wales (2025) states the importance of being a healthy weight as it enables and encourages children to grow and develop.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales, (2025) Racio Cifuentes believes that too much emphasis has been placed on an individual and their own choices and actions instead of highlighting the inequalities within society. However, the Commissioner does acknowledge the improvements the Welsh Government are making, including proposals published in

July 2024 seeking views on regulations and enforcement approaches for the food industry. This proposal wishes to address the marketing and promotional strategies on high fat, sugar and salt products which contribute to the high levels of obesity in children. They also suggest the need to remove these foods and drinks from key selling points such as checkouts and at the end of the aisle. (Welsh, Government, 2024). Under Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) every child has the right to the highest possible standard of health, it also maintains that governments have an obligation to see that every aspect of society particularly parents and children are informed, have access to education, and receive support in learning the basic concepts of nutrition and health. Although the Welsh Government has introduced free school meals in all primary schools in Wales, they still have not tackled secondary education. There is still more work to be done on combating obesity in children. One point that has been raised by the Commissioner in relation to a survey carried out in April 2024 on the views of children in primary schools on what they thought about their school meals and what needed to be improved. The results showed that 24% almost a quarter said they cannot have vegetables if they want them and 22% said they cannot always have fruit if they want it. This suggests that although school meals are free, they are still more to be done to maintain the nutritional value of these meals and that by providing more fresh fruit and vegetables for children in school will encourage that healthy eating habit within their home environment.

However, although there is great emphasis on diet and nutrition in relation to obesity, there is also a need to understand the need for physical activity alongside healthy eating. Alarming Wales has ranked joint lowest with 3 other countries that participated in the 2021 Active Healthy Kids Card. A concerning decrease of 9% in children in 2022 taking part in regular organised sports outside of the curriculum, along with a 15% decline in participation in afterschool activities between the least and most deprived areas. However, The Raising the Nation Play Commission released a report on declining playtime for children in schools in England. The report revealed concerning results from data over a 25-year period. It indicates that children in key stage one has 23 minutes less break time than those children in 1995. This suggests that instead of moving forward with progression in relation to the physical needs of children, there has been a rapid decline. This data only acknowledges the need for further interventions to be placed in schools and communities. To illustrate this point, the Welsh Government has acknowledged the need for extra curriculum activities and the need to improve the resources within the community that will benefit from children engaging in physical activity. It is providing an extra 5 million to local

authorities to purchase items to improve the quality of play spaces, refurbish playgrounds and support the creation of inclusive and accessible play. This is a positive move that can help aid the ongoing implications of obesity (Welsh Government, 2025).

Although these government initiatives are improving the outcomes of childhood obesity, the need to engage in early intervention is paramount. Louise *et al.*, (2021) states that a study carried out in 2021 on pregnant obese women who had been given early intervention on healthy lifestyles, nutritional advice and guidance during their pregnancies positively impacted their children's body mass index (BMI) activity and neurodevelopment at age 3-5 years. This is just one of many studies that have been carried out to prevent childhood obesity. Beij *et al.*, (2017) points out the importance of breast feeding and how effective it is in reducing obesity risks in children. The WHO (2023) states that for the first six months of life, newborns should only be breastfed to achieve the best possible growth, development, and health. Beyond this, newborns should continue to breastfeed for up to two years or so while consuming safe, nutritionally acceptable supplemental foods to cater to their changing nutritional needs. The WHO carried out a study across 16 countries in Europe. The study revealed that children who breastfeed for six months – with no formula or weaning foods involved were 25% less likely to be obese. Compared to 16.8% of children who were never breastfed and who were obese. The data also indicates that children who are never breastfed are 22% more likely to be obese during their childhood and into adulthood. The data came from nearly 30,000 children monitored as part of the WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance initiative (D,Gruz, 2019). This study highlights the importance of early intervention and provides vital information for new mothers. The first 1000 days of a child's life are important. However, it is not just the role of mothers to establish these foundations. Practitioner within childcare setting along with professionals such as health visitors all play a key part in providing knowledge to families along with providing healthy eating alternatives and providing guidance and advice on leading a healthy lifestyle not just for the child but also for the family. In conclusion, targeting the early years is essential to lowering childhood obesity. Healthy eating habits, regular exercise routines, and positive attitudes towards food and body image can all be developed in children through early intervention before bad habits become deeply embedded. Furthermore, the prevalence of pediatric obesity and the health issues it causes can be considerably decreased by addressing the risk factors early we can significantly reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and its associated health complications later

in life, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and psychological issues. Early prevention also reduces long-term healthcare costs and improves overall quality of life, creating healthier communities and promoting well-being across society.

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