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No AI used in this assignment.

Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyles

This poster will explore and define the concepts of health, wellbeing, and lifestyles, focusing on why these are important within the early years. This poster will look at different theories and models which are linked to early years practice. Additionally, the role of the practitioner within early years practice will be discussed with ways in which they can support the health, wellbeing, and lifestyles of young children, in order to support holistic development. Within this poster, the interconnections between all of these concepts will be explored, focussing on their impact with positive relationships and holistic child development.

Wellbeing.

The concept of is multi-dimensional involving physical, emotional, and social well-being which focusses on children's immediate, and future lives (Statham and Chase, 2010). Wellbeing can be explored through various lenses, including philosophical, economic, psychological, sociological, and health-related perspectives. Due to the wide range of factors that influence wellbeing, the concept remains vague, and numerous definitions exist. Wellbeing can be described as the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy. Then on the other hand, wellbeing can also be described as the quality of peoples' lives, such as health status (Musgrave, 2017). Mainstone-Cotton (2017) suggests how feeling loved, loving yourself, feeling good about yourself and being able to cope with life's challenges are all parts of an individual's wellbeing. It is also suggested that one of the most important roles that adults have is to help children have a good wellbeing, starting off by showing them that they are loved, that are special and that they are unique. When looking at well-being, practitioners and parents must consider, what makes a child happy. Roberts (2010) outlined the ABC Model of Well-being which lays out the three sections which all combine to set out a child's wellbeing. The three sections are communication, agency – belonging and boundaries, and physical well-being. It is suggested that wellbeing is shaped by two key states: a sense of agency and a sense of belonging and boundaries. Together these elements help individuals feel secure in themselves and in their relationships with others, contributing to a genal sense of coping and emotional balance (Roberts, 2010).

Health

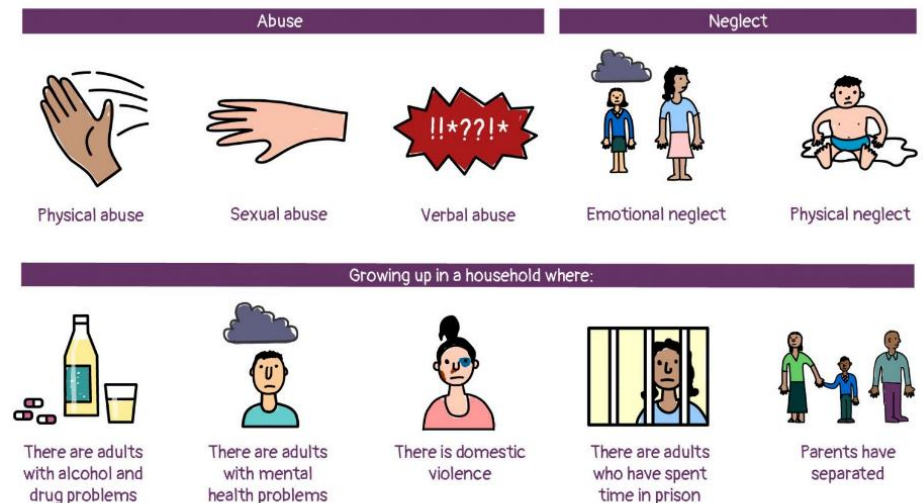
What is Health? Health is a complex term, with multiple different definitions. According to the World Health Organisation [WHO] (2025), health means being in a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just being free from illness or injury. This looks at an individual holistically. However, there is a negative definition of health, which is described as the absence of physical illness, disease, and mental diseases (Durch et al., 1997). Musgrave (2017) also explains that the medical model of health takes a biological or physical approach, concentrating on specific health conditions and their treatment. The social model of health adopts a holistic perspective on how health or illness affects individuals, considering social, emotional, and environmental factors (Musgrave, 2017). Health begins early on in life and then carries on into adulthood. Marmot (2010) suggested how the foundations for every part of human development, are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years have lifelong effects on many aspects of health and wellbeing, like obesity, heart disease and mental health. After exploring that there are different definitions of health, it is clear to see that health is a complex concept to define. Within the early years, early years practitioners play a significant role in ensuring healthy outcomes for children. Practitioners, promote healthy eating within settings which has a health benefit to a child's physical health (Parenta, 2018).

Lifestyles

When discussing what is meant by lifestyles, it analysed by who we live, for example living in poverty, individuals religions and beliefs, parents, relationships, diet etc. Estyn (2013) discusses how healthy living contributes to wellbeing. The term healthy living includes healthy eating and drinking, physical exercise, mental and emotional wellbeing, physical exercise, good mental and emotional wellbeing, responsible attitudes, and behaviours in relation to substance use and misuse and safety, hygiene, environment-related issues (Estyn, 2013). In order to live a life with incorporating positive lifestyles, it is important to develop good habits, develop positive ways of thinking and being motivated (Thomas and Lewis 2016). Research shows that there are five actions you can take to enhance your mental health and well-being. By trying these, it can make you feel more optimistic and better equipped to enjoy life to the fullest (NHS, 2022). These five ways are connect with other people, meaning that you should form positive relationships, be physically active which has physical and mental health benefits, learn new skills holistically in order to keep improving, give to others and support everyone around you, and pay attention to the present moment and understand that your actions have both positive and negative consequences (NHS, 2022). Early life experiences can have an effect on how a person decides to live their lives. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to extremely stressful and potentially traumatic events or situations that take place during childhood or adolescence. These can involve one-time incidents or ongoing threats that compromise a young person's sense of safety, security, trust, or physical well-being (Young Minds, 2018) cited in (Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, 2025). These experiences can cause a person to make bad/negative lifestyle choices.



(Source: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2025)



(Source: NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, 2025)

Within the early years, it is important to recognise that young children may not have the capability to make independent decisions about their lifestyles, and it is the role of adults in their lives to help shape their positive health outcomes.

Practitioners in early childhood settings are uniquely positioned to influence children's daily habits and overall health. One way that this can be achieved is by offering guidance on nutritious food choices. According to the Welsh Government (2025), settings should advise parents on what contributes to a healthy packed lunch, such as encouraging the inclusion of fruits and vegetables and discouraging sugary snacks or sweets. By giving recommendations and advice on what healthy eating looks like, practitioners contribute to the development of positive habits that children can carry into later life. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), article 24 states how every child has the right to access health services and facilities for the treatment of illness. It also emphasizes the importance of good quality health care, clean water and nutritious food, and education on health and well-being (UNICEF, 2025). To ensure that every child achieves this individual right of the child, early years practitioners must provide these key factors, and this can support the child to achieve positive holistic development. Another key component of promoting children's well-being is the support for families. Barnardo's (2025) highlights the importance of practitioners understanding the types of support available to families and using this knowledge to guide sensitive conversations with parents, particularly if concerns arise. It is also important for practitioners to feel confident in asking the right questions and to recognise when a family may require additional support. In early years settings, there are often inspections to ensure the best practice is taking place. Estyn, who offer guidance on the quality of standards of education and training in Wales to the Welsh government and share examples of effective practice drawn from inspection evidence with the public, are the body who are responsible for overseeing the practice in early years settings (Estyn, 2019). In one inspection, it was seen that one school's vision was for all pupils to 'flourish in life.' This vision was grounded from the following core values and beliefs: a sense of belonging, which nurtures confidence and personal development, recognising that young people are on a physical, mental and emotional growth, all staff members were committed to supporting the holistic development of every child, and collaboration which fosters confidence, creativity and reciprocity (Estyn, 2019). Estyn recognised the positive effect that this school's vision had on the culture and ethos of the school and its support for pupils, resulting in improvements in pupils' wellbeing. As discussed previously, ACE's can affect children's mental health and wellbeing. Howard (2020) discusses the importance of early years practitioners being aware of what ACE's are what they can do to support children with ACE's. One way of doing this is understanding what it is that triggers the trauma and knowing to avoid what it is, in order to support the child's wellbeing and happiness. Another way that early years practitioners can support children's health and wellbeing is by observing the child. Musgrave (2017) highlights how observing a child's emotional wellbeing is one of the easiest ways to understand the individual child. Observing how a child is feeling is done every day in settings who have good practice, as most settings do a morning check in to see how everyone is feeling. One way of observing an individual's wellbeing is by using the Leuven Scale during observations. The Leuven scale is commonly used within the early years, and it measures the child's involvement during activities on a scale of 1 to 5. One, being the least amount of involvement and then five being the most involved (Macrae and Jones, 2023). This is a useful way to see how an individual child is acting and can help practitioners identify any issues there might be. Multiagency work in the early years is vital in order to provide the best practice. Multi-agency working brings together professionals from different fields to collaborate in a coordinated and integrated manner on a shared goal, rather than working separately or in succession (Payler and Georgeson, 2013). The role of early years practitioners is to identify when there are problems with an individual child, this sometimes requires the involvement of other agencies. For example, if a class teacher identifies a child who appears to be having trouble with their hearing, the teacher will then require the help and guidance from an audiologist.

Word Count : 1820

The evidence presented in this poster clearly highlights the strong connection between health, well-being, and lifestyle, showing how each element significantly influences the others. As outlined, it is essential for young children to lead healthy lifestyles, with a focus on forming positive and nurturing relationships to support their overall growth and development. It is clear to see that practitioners play a vital role in promoting well-being in early childhood, and the poster explores effective strategies for achieving this. Exploring relevant models and theories, the importance of adopting a holistic approach to children's development is emphasized, helping to better support their needs and ensure their well-being. Guidance from the Welsh Government also informs best practices for promoting health and well-being in early years settings. Additionally, it is important to recognize that the concepts of health and well-being can evolve over time and may differ across life stages and cultural backgrounds.

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