

Cover Sheet Assignment title and number: Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyle ECEY5009

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Introduction

The aim of this academic poster is to introduce and discuss well-being, health and lifestyles and how these concepts have significant importance, and the impact of factors that influence a child's life and development. The poster will incorporate a view of theorists and models that will provide emphasis on the importance of the concepts for early years practice, including links to relevant legislation and the curriculum. Lastly, it also discusses how early years practitioners can support these concepts for children to thrive.

The concept of health, wellbeing and lifestyles as suggested by Thornton and Brunton (n.d.) highlight that in early years these three are combined to provide an overall holistic approach to support children to have a good quality life, including enabling caregivers or practitioners to meet children's individual needs.

(Comberg, 2011)



Health

According to Cazaly (2022) health is defined as a state of wellness, in relation to children this is considered a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellness, highlighting a child's ability to establish their potential and to be able to succeed in their environment and being able to thrive with relationships, development, nutrition, and education. It is also the idea of a child growing positively and functioning and not just the absence of illness (Brock, 2014). Bergen and Robertson (2013) suggest that health is important for children as it allows for a child to develop age-appropriate bodies and brains and reach key developmental milestones. Children who have good health can concentrate, play, and learn. Also sharing that it can reduce long-term health problems as healthy habits in the early years are formed in childhood, for example, good nutrition and exercise which can prevent future health issues arising. Lastly, it also promotes protection and safety for the child as a supportive environment shows signs of the child being safe from harm and neglect (Hurley, Yousafzai and Lopez-Boo, 2016). According to the Welsh Government (2015) the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act* tells individuals that children's health is critical for their future. Also, the United Nations Conventions Rights of a Child (UNCRC) tells practitioners and care givers that every child has the right to the best possible health. In view of children's health this can be seen as the child growing appropriately for their age, not having any illness or, if so, then the condition is managed appropriately for the child (UNICEF, 2025). A healthy child needs to be in an environment where they feel safe, cared for, have their psychical needs met and are supported by trusted adults. This links closely with the World Health Organization definition of health and the approach in Wales which focuses on early support and supporting the whole child. It also states that health for children can present as the child being immunised, with good nutrition, oral health, and healthy routines (World Health organisation, 2023). As stated by Prowle and Stobbs (2025) it is essential to discuss health for a child as it is the foundation for their start in early life. This can shape and form how they develop into adolescence and adulthood. The *Social Service Well-Being Act* (2014) highlights promoting the need for children to be physically active and opportunities to a healthy start in life. Welsh Government (2020) states that health is a core part of the curriculum for Wales and that it incorporates healthy eating, physical movement, emotional regulation and hygiene. Musgrave (2022) suggests that if health was to be impacted in the early life of a child it could lead to complicating factors that can be long-lasting. It can affect not just their health, but other areas of development, for example, experiencing chronic conditions, developmental delay, communication problems, academic challenges and difficulty in forming relationships.

Based on Belson, Snelling and Heap (2018) Maslow supports the emphasis on the importance of a child's health as the theory focuses on basic needs that a child must experience in order to be able to thrive. Physical health is a priority, ensuring that a child has access to food, sleep and personal hygiene to develop as they should. According to Welsh Government (2022) In Wales the curriculum has embedded the need to ensure that children's health is considered not just at home but during attending settings. Showing the crucial role for a practitioner to support health within early years. The practitioner must work under the curriculum in providing a child with consistent routines by giving opportunities for sleeping, eating and care, including enabling support for physical play. This enables the practitioner to apply a holistic approach rather than just formal teaching. Also, there is an obligation under the food and nutrition Wales regulation 2024 where practitioners must support children's nutritional needs. This is a core element of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Welsh Government, 2024). Practitioners can support children's health in early years by embedding the Healthy Child Wales Programme (HCWP) which is from birth to the age of seven years old. This allows practitioners to focus on early intervention with prevention and ensuring a multiagency working for the welfare of the child in relation to physical health and emotional development (Welsh Government, 2016).

Well-being

As stated by NHS England (2023) well-being is introduced as the experience of happiness, health and a state of peace further adding that it provides the sense of having meaning and purpose. Buckinghamshire council (2018) suggests that in relation to early years it is defined as a child who is developing in their formative years and allows for a positive foundation for children to develop emotionally, socially and cognitively. Amerijckx and Humblet (2014) shares that well-being is a significant contributing factor influencing children's development and ensuring that they can thrive and develop resilience. Furthermore, suggesting that wellbeing must be discussed in relation to children and the early years due to it directly impacting their overall development and growth, further sharing that well-being must be looked at holistically as it is considered that it affects all aspects of a child's life and must be balanced with health, cognitive function and lifestyle choices. Falkenberg (2023) states that positive well-being for a child means routine check-ups for health, supportive relationships, to be able to express their feelings, manage emotions and be able to engage in social activities. Additionally, they need to be able to learn new skills, adapt to new situations and be able to play and explore. This also includes a strong sense of identity where a child can feel proud of who they are and feel safe or secure. Cooke et al. (2018) discussed that the common theme in relation to well-being is children forming caring relationships and having encouragement to be involved in positive experiences at each stage of their development. Negative impacts of poor well-being include health issues such as a child living in poverty – this can result in poor sanitation, having no access to care and thus catching preventable illnesses. Furthermore, Pannilage (2017) states that this results in a child suffering with lack of confidence and struggling to regulate emotions. Children may experience a social impact such as difficulty making relationships, social withdrawal and a reduction in a sense of belonging. Physically a child could have sleep difficulties and poor eating habits. Cognition and learning could be impacted such as memory difficulties, behaviour changes, slower progression and concentration issues (Gheaus, Calder and Wispelaere, 2019). In Wales the early years Foundation Phase discusses that well-being is important as it places well-being as a core value, aiming for children to live fulfilling lives while maintaining emotional resilience, self-esteem and independence (Welsh Government, 2023).

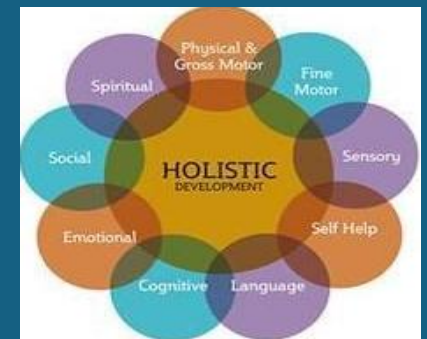
In the view of Kesavelu, Sheela and Abraham (2021) discussing Erikson's psychological development theory, highlights that children will experience stages across a certain time-period in their life, discussing that at each stage a child will experience a psychosocial crisis experience which children must overcome for positive emotional and social development. The outcome for children considering the experience of such a crisis is essential for well-being and positive mental health (Malone et al., 2016). Erikson's psychological development theory puts emphasis on the key ideas that well-being consists of 8 stages of psychological development including: when infancy builds a sense of security, early childhood where confidence is built and pre-school age with encouragement, exploration and decision making. Department for Education (2024) highlights that the early years learning framework (EYLF) initiates the need for supporting children's overall well-being as it allows children to ensure a strong sense of self purpose and to be able to form positive relationships. Also, Sutherland, Mukadam and Rawlings, (2018) discusses that children's well-being places the responsibility on practitioners to provide diversity and inclusion to all children, with the ability to provide a centred approach. This can enable practitioners to focus on children's individual strengths and needs, allowing for a key person to encourage children's voices, choice and encourage self-identity. This also supports the idea of Erikson's psychological development theory in practice enabling practitioners to understand age-appropriate needs for initiative and security, while reassuring children and guiding them throughout their day-to day challenges. This allows practitioners to use skills such as supporting safe exploration to help children make sense of the world around them and contribute to their overall well-being (Jones and Waite-Stupiansky, 2022).

Lifestyle

The Britannica Dictionary (2025) suggests that lifestyle is defined as a way that an individual chooses to live their life. Furthermore, Lioret et al. (2020) highlights that lifestyle in early years practice considers habits and practices that promote children to achieve, good health and well-being. As noted by Jakobovich et al. (2023) lifestyle to a child means exposure, routines, diet, exercise, sleep, social opportunities, play, daily habits and having an emotional environment. Lifestyles should shape and guide a child's well-being. Additionally sharing that lifestyle is a vital aspect of a child's life because the aspects of lifestyle choices support brain development, social skills, building positive relationships resulting in children having consistent care and a supportive future (Mollborn, Lawrence and Krueger, 2020).

(Lauren, 2016)

Mollborn and Lawrence (2018) highlights that there are many factors that shape how a child experiences lifestyle, such as the home environment, income, diet and nutrition, exercise, relationships, community, parenting ability and engagement with services. The negative impacts of a poor lifestyle for children can be detrimental as it can lead to poor health outcomes and poor mental health. This can be seen as a child who has inconsistent routines and poor diet results in a child feeling insecure which can affect behaviour and a reduction in self-control. Children who experience poverty or who are disadvantaged are exposed to a high risk of psychological impact with long-term development issues resulting in fewer opportunities to thrive (Michels et al., 2015).



UNICEF (2025) discuss that it is important for children's lifestyles to be considered because of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle for a child. World Health Organization (2019) states that a child needs a consistent lifestyle to help prevent long-term issues.

In line with Guy-Evans (2025) Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory links to the understanding of lifestyle for children. This is due to it explaining how children's well-being is guided by the different layers and environments that they are exposed to and interact with, rather than the child being on its own. According to Bronfenbrenner, outside influences play a vital role. The microsystem is the child's immediate environment. The mesosystem is how well the relationships of the child's environment are working together. The ecosystem is consideration of the environment that indirectly affects the child. The macrosystem highlights the wider social influences, and the chronosystem represents changes over a period of time that can affect development or lifestyle. This system illustrates that a child's view of the world is shaped by these interacting layers which can influence their lifestyle (Guanghui, 2024).

In line with Arafa et al. (2024) a child's lifestyle choice is often determined by the parent and this influences their health and well-being. Therefore, the child should develop good habits, with the parent shaping their life, and decisions being made around their needs. This is vital as a parent is their role model and main provider within their early years.

Ofsted (2025) reports that practitioners should be efficient in their approach to children and provide support based on knowledge of the child's background and their individual needs. Practitioners in settings can become key support individuals for a child who may experience poverty or suffer from adverse childhood experiences which can be defined as any kind of neglect or abuse.

In respect to this, practitioners take on the role of providing parents with all types of support that they can access if the family or the child need it; this can mean approaching a conversation with parents with sensitive questions and respect. (Department for education, 2021). Social Care Institute For Excellence (2022) reports that taking the approach of a multi-disciplinary aspect can be the best support for a family or child to ensure that the outcomes are appropriate for all involved. A practitioner actively recognising such complex situations for a child can have the biggest impact for that child or family

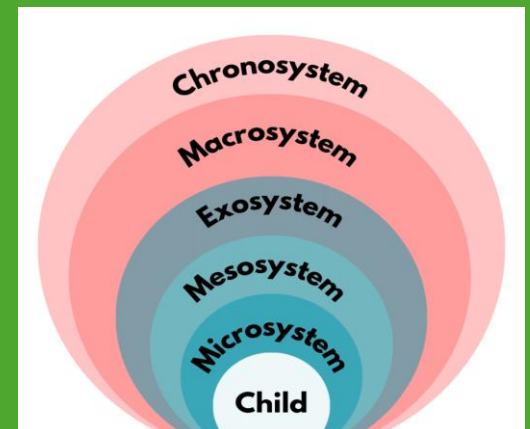
Conclusion

To conclude, it is evident from the poster's findings that health, well-being and lifestyle clearly influence each other.

Analysis of the evidence shows that the three concepts are connected and support each other to provide children with the opportunity to thrive. Overall, promoting the establishment of an even balance between health, well-being and lifestyle contribute to the best start in life for a child. This includes highlighting the importance of how a practitioner can either have an impact on this or positively support a child.

In summary, theorists, models, legislation and the curriculum all support the idea of how important it is to prioritise the concept of health, wellbeing and lifestyle for children to be healthy, safe, emotionally stable and to be able to engage in overall holistic development within their early years.

(Explore Psychology, 2024)



Script – 15-minute presentation

Part 1- Introduction

First slide – front page

In this 15-minute presentation there will be an exploration into the effects of poverty on the health of children. This will cover, introducing the topic and defining the terms, discussing the importance, looking at the effects specifically on health and well-being, sharing how this is linked to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and lastly application in practice.

Second slide-

With that in mind, the Children's commissioner for Wales published in 2024 that approximately 31% of children living in Wales are living in poverty. This number suggests that there are a high number of children experiencing challenges, living in homes where there is financial instability and basic needs are not being met.

According to World health organisation (2025) health is defined in many ways such as an individual being free from disease or infirmity where they are completely physically, mentally and socially competent. Schramme (2023) supports this by sharing that health is considered how well your mind and body is presenting, stating that it is not just about not being sick but about being well overall.

Also, stated by NHS England (2023) the understating of well-being is the even balance of managing mental, emotional, social, cognitive and physical development in line with the choice of day-to-day lifestyle. Mental Health Foundation (2015) agrees by discussing that well-being is considered the concept of feeling comfortable and functioning in daily life with the feelings of thriving and balance.

According to Oxfam (2025) poverty is defined as the idea of lacking resources to meet children's needs. This is considered when a family of a child cannot meet their basic needs due to the lack of resources leading to the inability of achieving the minimum standard of living needed. This can include various aspect of an individual's life such as housing, food, healthcare, education. Treanor (2020) supports this and discusses that for a child this can display as a child who is unable to attend a setting because the family cannot afford it or a child not being able to have medication due to the cost. Further examples can include a child not having appropriate clothing, or poor nutrition or hygiene due to the cost of living on parents.

McLeod (2025) suggests that the Hierarchy of Needs is defined as a psychological diagram of a theory created by Abraham Maslow which organises an individual's needs into five categories, with the idea of these outlining what individuals need to thrive and be their best self.

Third slide

Part 2

According to Howard (2025) poverty can have an extreme impact on a child's health as children who experience poverty do not have access to nutritious food on a regular basis which can result in the child displaying malnutrition. This can lead to the child being exposed to health issues such as the child's physical growth being stunted where they may not develop as they should for their age. Additionally, Saitadze and Lalayants (2020) shares that further effects include the child having a higher risk of becoming unwell, this could be due to lack of heating in the home or lack of clean water, hygiene or access to health services which can lead to the possibility of illnesses and infections, resulting in chronic or long-term conditions. Cates, Weisleder and Mendelsohn (2016) suggested that the severity of a child experiencing poverty can result in the child's cognitive function decreasing, this includes developing mental health and emotional problems such as anxiety, depression or stress.

In accordance with Mahomes and King (2012) the effects of poverty can be detrimental in the view of well-being as it can cause children to become withdrawn and worry a lot, which can impact on their mood, relationships, confidence and how they present emotionally. Due to poverty often effecting education, children may have limited access to schoolbooks, ranging to the inability to attend school regularly. This can result in reduced skills and the opportunity to achieve academically. Also, this can develop into the child struggling with their sense of belonging, interactions with others, friendships and being able to develop in social skills setting (Carter, 2018).

Next slide- fourth slide

Pollak and Wolfe (2020) states that a lack of poverty is important for children as it substantially harms their health and well-being suggesting strong effects on the way in which a child experiences their life, additionally linking to how they grow, develop and experience the world around them.

Landiyanto (2024) shares that the importance of addressing the topic of poverty is key for protecting children's, present development and to ensure that they have a safe, happy, health and future that has stability. The experience of these early disadvantages can progress into adulthood which can reduce the ability to achieving academically, limit job opportunities, quality of life and the ability to enjoy day to day life. Overall, from the evidence it is clear to suggest that poverty affects every aspect in a child's life, and not just health and well-being. Children are open to intense vulnerability as often their lifestyle choices are out of their control, resulting in the ongoing cycle of poverty. Nonetheless the importance of the effects of poverty on children and their lives is a topic that should be acknowledged and prioritised as the challenges faced by children in these situations not only effect their ability to thrive but also their current quality of life which can affect them for the rest of their lives (Dobson and Melrose, 2020).

Next slide -Fifth slide

Poverty is frequently recognised as a wide social issue which is often significantly discussed in relation to children. In line with Children in Wales (2024) Every year the Children in Wales organisation work collaboratively with the End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) Cymru to undertake Child and Family Poverty Surveys, this also includes capturing the voice of practitioners and professionals in settings. This allows for firsthand voices to be heard, allowing for the impact of poverty in Wales to be identified with the idea of informing policies and practice. The conclusion of these surveys shares information from real-life situations that families are challenged with on a daily basis. Highlighting that there needs to be more time spent address the inequality and disadvantaged that these children and families experience (Ali and Westall, 2024).

Additionally, Senedd research reported research data where it was discovered that 80% of children in Wales that live in poverty still have a parent that is in full time work suggesting that despite parents working a family could still be in crisis (Thomas and Thomas, 2023).

The child commissioner for Wales made a statement explaining that poverty is “the biggest issue affecting children in Wales and tackling it effectively is the Welsh Government’s biggest task” showing light that it widely known about and that addressing it as a whole can be difficult with minimal changes (Children's commissioner for Wales, 2024b).

In line with Wales Office (2025) UNICEF and Uk Government also shares supporting evidence in providing information about the effects that poverty has on children and families, discussing the need for constant monitoring and addressing of the issue to protect children and their futures.

Next slide -sixth slide

Part 3

In Line with Noltemeyer et al (2020) Maslow's hierarchy of needs links to the topic crucially as it impacts on the ability of a child having their basic level of needs met. Such social issues as poverty does not allow for the lower level of the hierarchy needs to be met which the results in the other levels being unmet which the effect on higher level of development. As stated by Cleveland clinic (2025) the theory evidenced that individuals have needs and individual ideally seek to meet them in a certain order.

According to Maslow's theory, individuals need can be arranged in categories and proved to be arranged in the view of a hierarchy, with the view if survival needs are the bottom and self-actualisation needs at the top. Maslow evidently argues that the survival needs must be adequately accessible for a child before they can be exposed to the higher needs to holistically thrive (Tan, Lee and Tham, 2025)

According to Pichère (2015) In the view of how the hierarchy is levelled, it begins with level 1 which is self-fulfilment needs if these are not met the child will develop poor physical health and mental health increasing the child's emotional vulnerability and development. secondly, level 2 & 3 which are psychological needs, stress put on these levels will affect a child's ability to form attachments and allow a child to develop poor social skills increasing the experience of exclusion and behavioural problems. Lastly is, level 4 & 5 which are basic human needs if these are unmet it reduces the child's self-worth, motivation and can put children in the state of not releasing their potential to thrive (Slater and Bremner, 2017).

In summary, poverty directly links to the idea of Maslow's theory as it interferes with level 4 and 5 physiological and safety needs. Due to these needs having to be met for a child first, child who are vulnerable to poverty are at a higher risk of suffering in relation to health and all aspects of the development. This interplay between basic needs and higher-level needs is crucial in understanding how poverty can affect an individual's ability to improve their circumstances and break the cycle of poverty (Cortés-Morales and Main, 2021).

Next slide -seventh slide

Part 4

In line with research in practice (2025) a practitioner can apply their skills in practice to ensure that a child who has experienced poverty is treated with dignity, respect, empathy. Also maintain a safe space for children, use inclusive language Support children to feel valued, secure and ensure all children have equal opportunities. The practitioner can also support early intervention by using a strength-based approach to the child and family's situation working on resilience (Children's commissioner for England, 2026).

According to NSPCC (2024) a setting can support children who experience poverty by ensuring that the correct Referrals to services food and clothes banks are in place for the family, provide access to hygiene facilities and Access to after school clubs or breakfast clubs. If a setting was to apply this in practice it would allow access to services such as integrated survive which include hubs and family centres. These services have been made in line with supporting families to reduce the challenge of accessing support with the inclusive idea of improving outcomes for children. A setting can also provide directed support by using local authority support such as services like perinatal, therapist and speech and language derives (Action for children, n.d.)

In relation to Welsh government In September 2022, the prioritised looking at children in education and enabled the idea of the national policy to allow all children access to free healthy school meal despite their (Nesta, 2023). The Welsh government implemented the Child Poverty Strategy in 2024. This approach has been put into practice to look at challenging child poverty over the next ten years (Welsh Government, 2024). The purpose of the strategy is to challenge poverty by working with integrated policies, collaborating as a community sand to focus on family's well-being as part of early intervention. In line with the strategy the

Uk government appointed a child poverty taskforce with co-chairs to look at incomes in households and how to raise them to support families out of situations where poverty is considered (Gov UK, 2024).

According to Welsh Government (2015) The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also supports application to practice in relation to poverty as its core aim is to improve social, environmental, and the cultural well-being of Wales for children and future generations. Additionally, The Welsh Government's initiated the 'Building a Brighter Future' plan in 2013 which was put into practice to improve children's opportunities and outcomes of all children in Wales (Welsh Government, 2013).

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