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**WELLNESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH, SAFETY,
NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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Introduction

Wellness of the children in the early period of their childhood is important for their physical and mental development. The overall developments of the children's are dependent on proper health and maintenance of physical activities by their parents and teachers. There are various activities and wellness policies that need to be amalgamated in the development of children between the age group of 2-4 and 5-6 years. The prime focus of the study is to frame certain policies and activities related with wellness and physical development of the children. Identifying special care and needs for children, establishing different ways to create a positive environment for children's and guidelines to be followed by the families.

Content of the book

The activity contains the sense that improves the earlier period of childhood as this develops the critical activities for maintaining the segment of health, nutrition, safety and physical education. The main motive of the study is to gain a better understanding about child health, nutrition and safety segments and the essential activity conduction for extract better outcomes. In this study, the critical activities will emerge based on the children that belong under the age of 6 in order to look after the challenges that they faced and mitigate them in an effective way. It is important to implement physical education in every initial childhood classroom for child health development. At the earlier stage of childhood that is measured by 1 to 6 years old, there is a necessity to secure the factors that are relevant to the health, safety, nutrition and physical fitness (Leider *et al.* 2020). Each of these essential segments can be maintained through the conduction of crucial activities such as *practicing the Alphabet*, as this improves their learning skills and performance development at an earlier childhood. On the other hand, the implementation of *offer choices, answering the questions, building blocks, practice shape and colours* among the book can enhance the decision making skills and cognitive thinking skills of the children in an effective way

Policy of wellness

The Wellness Policy describes how the critical activities or program promotes specific practices. Children benefit greatly from the daily practices of your program, which help them develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. There are mainly 8 critical key components among the segment of wellness policies that are as follows - *Stress reduction, weight loss activities, Smoking cessation, health risk assessments, Exercise activities, vaccination,*

education for nutrition, health monitoring (Schuler *et al.* 2018). There are several beneficial factors that can be extracted due to the conduction of policies or regulations of wellness at the early stages of childhood. The advantages of adopting the policies of wellness are mentioned below-

- Children's families, child care providers, and the community should be informed of the values and principles regarding healthy eating.
- Practice healthy habits yourself to serve as an example for your child care providers and your family members.
- Clarify and establish consistent standards (this prevents future misunderstandings).
- Teach this habit to children in order to help them develop healthy habits.

Apart from this, there is a necessity to conduct critical activities in order to develop their cognitive thinking skills along with their performance level at the very early stages. Various types of coursework's need to be adopted for enhancing the efficiency among the area of their health care, promotion, maintaining their nutrition chart along with their physical safety and education. As per the content of this study, leads towards greater efficiency and development of cognitive thinking skills of the children from the beginning of their childhood.

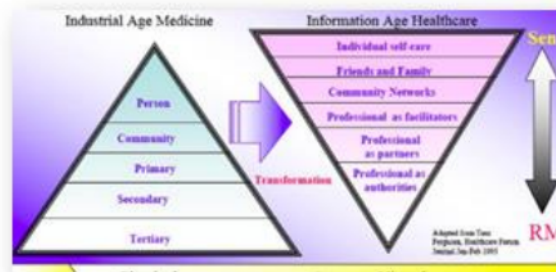


Figure 1: Wellness Policy of Malaysia

(Source: Piekarz-Porter *et al.* 2017)

Moreover, this can be said that the components of the wellness policies are **nutrition, health, safety, physical education** (Francis *et al.* 2018). It is important to conduct 24 hours of health screening coursework in terms of extracting better information and knowledge about the children's behavior, intentions at the earlier stages of childhood (Piekarz-Porter *et al.* 2017). Moreover, the teachers and the parents need to follow the rules and regulations towards their

children to look after the health, safety and nutrition segment at their earlier stages. In order to do that, the parents and the teachers need to understand the different perspectives of their children with more credibility and efficiency (Hoke *et al.* 2018). Through the conduction of attractive environments and surroundings among the children's, such as play schools that contain colors, toys and models that improves the children's cognitive thinking skills and personal behavior and performance at their earlier stages of childhood. On the other hand, it is important to look after the segment of physical education towards the children as well as this improves their health fitness (Mansfield & Saviano, 2017). The people of Malaysia can benefit from wellness programs by increasing their health and quality of living. People are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by means of these wellness programs. It may seem confusing at first glance how to navigate the healthcare system in Malaysia, including picking the right doctor, finding affordable care, and deciding between public and private care. Due to extensive government support through investments in hospital medical infrastructure, Malaysia's healthcare system is among the best in the world. Generally taxed income is used to fund Malaysia's public healthcare system. All Malaysians can access public universal healthcare funded by the government, which provides comprehensive and low-cost services. There are several reasons for the rising costs of private treatment in Malaysia over the past few years. In Malaysia, there is no national medical insurance program, which makes it imperative to purchase private health and life insurance. This is mainly due to patients moving from private to public hospitals, causing income loss. Most employers provide medical insurance; however, it is possible to purchase additional health coverage to ensure better coverage. Common ailments, medical consultations, hospitalizations, and prescription medications should all be covered by health insurance.

A range of activities need to conduct for enhancing their physical fitness and health that are mentioned below-

- Include physical activity in at least 20% of the morning and after-school program time (for full-day programs, include 60 minutes of physical activity).
- At least 50% of each toddler's physical activity time should be spent engaged in aerobic, muscle- and bone-strengthening exercises.¹² Participate in aerobic activity that is age-appropriate.

- Children should be given ways to strengthen their ¹ muscles, such as push-ups, sit-ups, and climbing on play structures. Children that contain numerous qualities should be able to participate in fun and educational physical activity activities.
- Participation in activities should be inclusive. Breaks in learning or sedentary activities should be interrupted by short physical activity breaks to allow children to stay motivated and avoid ¹ long periods of sitting, and to integrate physical activity into transition times.

Child wellness program Treasured Tots' three key pillars

In order to be resilient, children must be able to adapt and bounce back when challenged and faced with challenges as this is addressed as **Resilience**. On the other hand, **wellbeing** refers to children who feel a sense of belonging and are physically healthy and strong, which increases their happiness and confidence. Furthermore, **Awareness** refers to a child's ability to recognize and understand their own feelings, thoughts, and actions. The Program will be provided with no additional cost to children attending a Treasured Tots Early Education centre. The Program engages all children in activities considering cultural significance, but this cannot be said of all activities. Whenever a child participates in a program activity, their Cultural significance is also taken into account. The conduction of **Treasured Tots** framework leads towards the development of the cognitive thinking skills among the children at their earlier ages as this generates the sense of independent and confident learners. In the area of improving the overall efficiency of education and their health care segment the conduction of suitable and critical policies of wellness plays a critical role in the segment. Moreover, this can be said that the conduction of **Policies of wellness** can lead towards the development of their cognitive skills along with their health, nutrition and safety measures.

Activities of each components

Activities for safety: children between the age group of 2-4 and 5-6 years in the early period of their childhood are more prone to accidents, emotionally unstable, hyperactive and intellectually handicapped if not supervised. As per Mawson (2019), it is the responsibility of the parents and the teachers to create a safe and secure environment for the children's. This helps in building relationships, becoming more confident about their actions and developing learning habits. There are 3 different components under which the development of children's takes namely physical, social and temporal environment. In order to ensure safe and secure development of children in these factors, certain activities need to be practiced such as:

Activities for 2-4 years

- Supporting responsive caregiving, it helps in fostering trust and developing emotional engagement with people.
- Fostering independence and feeling of competence in young children, inculcating the feeling of independence and competence allows children to explore new areas and learn new things. Competency increases the feeling of developing personality (Lavrysen *et al.* 2017).

Activities for 5-6 years

- Decreasing challenging behaviour among the children, the eruption of such behaviour affects the mental state and develops the feeling of envy among the children. As per O’Nions *et al.* (2017), discussing, sharing emotions and engaging in minimal activities can reduce the challenging behaviours of children’s in these age groups.

Activities for nutrition: The overall physical and mental development of children’s is largely dependent on the level of nutrition observed by the child in the period of development. A present report shows that almost ² 48 million children under the age of 5 years will die between 2020 to 2030 due to health issues and poor nutrition (UNICEF, 2020). Hence there are certain different ways through which nutrition intake of children can be enhanced. These include:

Activities for 2-4 years

- The veggie guessing bag game, this activity increases the awareness among the children about veggies and the level of nutrition associated with it.
- Indulging in excursions on farm or food markets acts as a way of increasing knowledge about the foods.

Activities for 5-6 years

- Offering different foods based on some selected themes increases the curiosity of children on foods.

Activities for physical education:

Physical activities are important for proper physical and mental development of children, thus different activities associated with includes:

Activities for 2-4 years

- Dancing and jumping, this helps in strengthening bones and develops muscle growth (Ibrahim *et al.* 2020).

- Stretching increases the flexibility of the body and improves functioning of nerves.

Activities for 5-6 years

- Indulging in swimming activity helps in the overall development of the body and strengthens the muscle.

Consideration for children with special educational needs

Fostering independence in children is an effective educational technique that needs to be effectively built in order to ensure the proper growth of children. As per the opinions of Dore *et al.* (2018), fostering independence allows the child to enhance its *academic performance and take responsibility for its own deeds*. Along with that, it tends to *grow confidence* in the child in order to make them *capable of facing every situation independently*. In this context, independence not only promotes *confidence and perseverance*, but also enhances *self esteem, self-reliance, helps in facing success and failure and accordingly makes them capable to have control over their own life*. Moreover, team performance of the children gets improved by enhancing their independence, therefore making effective decisions while performing any group task gets easier.

Children need special education in terms of learning problems and disabilities. The families need to take care of the children with special education needs and encourage them to communicate with others. As mentioned by Ilkim, Tanir & Özdemir (2018) there is a need to socialize the impact of physical activity among the children with special educational needs. Limited educational environment needs to be made in order to train the children by providing adequate support. In these circumstances, the role of *physical education and physical activity* can be seen as appropriate. This can be helpful for giving a perspective of integration among the children with the need of special education to the society. However it can be seen that several schools have taken necessary steps ⁴ in order to increase the level of physical activity among the children with the need for special education. The main reason behind this could be the risk of the children being obese is higher than the adolescents and adults. Children tend to have higher BMI (Body Mass Index) in recent times and in order to control diseases and side effects of being obese, physical activity can be a significant option.

Guideline for collaboration with families

Identification of the basic needs of a child:

Every child has some specific characteristics, therefore the parents and caregivers need to identify the basic needs of a child. In this context, Tamir & Regev (2021) opined that, although every child is different, there are some specific and common needs of a child that needs to be taken care of in order to ensure a happy and healthy childhood for the children. These needs have been identified below:

- ❖ Water and a well balanced diet with all the nutritional value
- ❖ Physical exercises
- ❖ Maintenance of the child's personal hygiene
- ❖ Protecting the child from every accidents and injury
- ❖ Proper sleep and rest
- ❖ A loving relationship and emotional bond with the family members
- ❖ Education and proper guidance

Factors and major area essential for child development:

As per the suggestions of Keung *et al.* (2020), five major components for child development includes ***proper nutrition, parenting and the behaviour of parents towards the child, cultural and social practices and healthy environment***. On the other hand, five major areas that are required for child development can be identified as ***emotional and social development, cognitive development, language and speech development, gross and fine motor skill development***. These factors not only ensure proper growth of a child, but also affect the wellbeing and mental health. However, some major concerns for ensuring the health of a child can be identified as ***physical health, social health, emotional health and spiritual health***.

In this context, ***physical health*** of the child needs to be maintained as it affects the development and lifestyle of the child. Consequently, Field (2017) opined that ***social health*** ensures the behaviour, communication, expression of feelings and the pattern of socialization. Social well being is an indicator of behaviour and positive traits of the child whereas emotional and mental well being tends to signify the problem behaviour and personal wellness of a child. Therefore, these identified factors need to be critically evaluated and assured by the parents in order to ensure an enhanced childhood.

Ensuring well being of a child and its requirement:

Safe and nurturing environment can be signified as an essential part of supporting the development and learning procedure of children. In this context, Shannon *et al.* (2021) opined that ***a safe and responsive environment*** is not only essential for prevention of challenging behaviour and ensuring wellbeing, but also can be identified as protection from external harm. Each family needs to identify the aspects of the ***physical, emotional, social and temporal environment*** of a child in order to ***foster independence, support care giving, decrease the challenging environment and promote the safety of the child***. Accordingly, safety measures need to be maintained by providing safe toys, supervision and preparation for emergencies, safety teaching procedure, accountability and special recognition for external injuries. Hence, a proper environment needs to be maintained by the family members as well as teachers to ensure the wellbeing of a child towards ensuring a safe childhood.

Nutritional needs:

As opined by Benjamin-Neelon (2018), proper nutrition is pivotal for the child as it ensures rapid growth, development, and boosts the immunity system of a child.

- ❖ Breastfeeding is essential as it can be identified as complete nutrition for a child
- ❖ Water and energy requirement needs to be maintained as builds immunity system of a child
- ❖ Phosphorus and Calcium are crucial for teeth and bones, Zinc and Magnesium are essential for skeleton, nerve and muscle development and Iron is essential for blood formation

Overall healthcare:

As opined by Forslund Frykedal *et al.* (2018), parents need to be careful by ensuring the proper healthcare for the children as it also implements the protection for the children. Therefore first aid is necessary for assisting any kind of injury of a child. Moreover, emotional and mental health of a child can be identified as a major area for concern as it can be significantly considered as optimal development and complete wellbeing in cognitive, social, behavioural and emotional domains. On the other hand, Susanto (2018) stated that the overall health of a child is not only physical or mental health; in this context overall wellbeing of the family, community and the environment also matters. Therefore, parents of the children need to be careful not only about the health of a child but also should ensure the external environment for the child's wellbeing.

Promote positive attitude towards health, safety, nutrition and physical education

In the present scenario, it can be stated that several wellness and awareness programmes have been taken into consideration in order to promote the health status and physical fitness among the children. Additionally, there is a need to promote awareness about nutrition and safety that can be appropriate in order to maintain proper balance and to educate the children of being responsible for their own health and safety.

- ***Health and nutrition status of the children physical fitness and understanding safety and need for the positive attitude***

In physical education, there is a need to promote the health and nutritional status of the children in order to provide an idea to the children about the need for proper health and nutritional status. In accordance with Moluguri, Gayathry & Gurnule (2019) in present time it can be seen that malnutrition is becoming a leading problem among the children specifically in the developing countries. In the present context it can be seen as essential in order to promote the positive attitude among the children of the age 1-6 years in order to maintain health and eat a balanced diet to balance the nutrition. Several factors can be responsible for the poor health and nutritional status among the children that can affect the health for a long term. As opined by Poh *et al.* (2019) a research that has been done among the Malaysian children shows that the socioeconomic status of the family serves as a leading factor toward the health and nutrition among the children. On the other hand, poor nutritional status and health factors may seem to be associated with cognitive performances of the children.

In these circumstances it can be stated that there is a need to promote the positive attitude and concern towards maintaining health and proper nutritional status. However, there is a need to drink an adequate amount of water in order to be hydrated and healthy all the time. In many of the reseraches, it has been found that maintaining proper health and nutritional status can in turn help in reducing the child mortality rate. The work of Vaivada, Gaffey & Bhutta (2017) shows that, in spite of several improvements in the health structure, the mortality and morbidity rates among the children specifically under the age of 5 years are high in several parts of the world. In This occurrence, it can be stated that promoting the positive attitude towards the need of proper nutrition among the children and family can help in reducing the mortality and morbidity rates of the children (WHO, 2020). In order to promote safety in children there is a need to make them

understand about the dangers and enforce rules that can help in measuring the safety. Many of the developing countries use several child safety measure instruments in order to track the children and these devices are wearable most of the time. The work of Bhoopal *et al.* (2019) suggests that the wearable smart devices can be seen as appropriate as in order to use these devices there is no need to be tech savvy and have high priced smartphones. The smart text can help the children in order to communicate with the parents or caregivers.

- ***Components and activities that need to be taken by the families for the promotion of the wellness***

The three different components that have been taken into consideration in the present scenario are- ***Health and nutritional status, Safety measures and Physical education.***

Health and nutritional status- Activity 1:

Families of the children need to take strict action in order to follow proper nutrition and health for the children. Moreover, nutrition plays a significant role in the preschool stages of the children. As per the interview from a Malaysian family it can be stated that the family must take innovative initiatives in order to make the children interested in nutritious foods. The family has chosen an activity namely ***the theme testing activity*** that helps them to recognize the veggies and foods as well. This can help them to be interested about the foods and the parents or caregivers can give them a brief idea about the nutritious value of the food.

Safety measures- Activity 1:

order to promote safety measures among the children the family has tended to take the ***Responsive Caregiving strategy*** in order to build emotional security and trust that can in turn have a positive outcome for the future of the children.

Physical Education- Activity 1:

In order to promote wellness about physical health, family emphasis on several ***physical activities and exercise***. Physical exercise and activities help the children go through the day without fatigue and become more alert (Kuan *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the families claim that the children may become more alert and participate in different kinds of sports that helps in boosting the physique and energy.

Personal reflection and experience

From the demonstration of all the activities and policies associated with the wellness and development of children in the period of early childhood. The facts that I have associated with the development of children is that in order to foster development of children from every sphere it is important to maintain all the different factors of development. From my personal experience I have realized certain facts that for maintaining proper physical health of children involving them in certain physical activities is important. Children's that do not indulge in any kind of physical activities suffer health related issues in the early stage of their life. Along with that proper development of mental wellbeing also does not take place in the children. Apart from physical activities there is also a need to address proper nutrition levels in children. Not having a proper nutrition level does not also facilitate physical development and growth in the early children. Following certain policies framed for the development of children's by the government also needs to be taken into consideration for maintain wellbeing of the children.

Conclusion

Child health and wellness can be significantly stated as mental, physical, intellectual, emotional and social wellbeing for ensuring the growth and development of a child. Accordingly, wellness is crucial as it ensures the communication system, habit and behaviour of a child. In this context, the overall study has been effectively designed by identifying the necessity for health, safety, physical education and nutrition of a child in order to design a wellness policy for children. Moreover, multiple activities have been identified and described in order to promote growth of a child. However, basic needs of a child have been identified as nutrition, safety, emotional bond, proper guidance and health that need to be critically evaluated and maintained for all round development of a child. Therefore, the overall study has been critically evaluated by considering all the major aspects that has enhanced the effectiveness of outcome of wellbeing and health measures of the children.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: BMI chart

Adults	BMI kg/m ²	Children 2 – 18 yrs	BMI Percentile	BMI z score
Underweight	<18.5	Underweight	<5 th	<-1.6
Normal	18.5–24.9	Normal	≥5 th , <85 th	≥-1.6, <1.0
Overweight	25.0–29.9	Overweight*	≥85 th , <95 th	≥1.0, <1.6
Obesity Class I	30.0–34.9	Obese†	≥95 th	≥1.6, <2.0
Obesity Class II	35.0–39.9	Moderately Obese	≥98 th	≥2.0, <2.5
Obesity Class III	≥40.0	Severely Obese	>99 th	≥2.5

(Source: WHO, 2020)

Appendix 2: Cleanliness measure



(Source: Shannon *et al.*, 2021)