

Guidance on well-being for under-fives out for consultation^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

The importance of early education for vulnerable children has been recognised in new draft guidance developed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

NICE is developing public health guidance on how the social and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children aged under five can be effectively supported through home visiting, childcare and early education.

The draft guidance, Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Early Years, recommends a number of cost-effective evidence based interventions designed to identify vulnerable children under five-years-old and provide additional support to families.

It acknowledges that disadvantage in a child's early years can have a life-long, negative effect on their health and well-being, and children living in disadvantaged circumstances are more likely to experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as a result of poor health, education and employment outcomes.

Aimed at those responsible for the social and emotional well-being of young children-including early years practitioners, local authorities, GPs and health visitors, the guidance focuses on the importance of better co-ordinated strategic and local early years services.

Among its recommendations, it highlights the importance of high quality childcare in enhancing children's social and emotional well-being and their capacity to learn, and says that all children should have the opportunity to attend childcare, with flexible attendance times so parents can take on paid employment.

It also suggests that early years practitioners develop trusting relationships with vulnerable families and adopt a non-judgmental approach, as well as ensure that childcare and early education services are run by well-trained qualified staff, including graduate staff and qualified teachers.

Other recommendations include for the health and wellbeing strategy of health and well-being boards to include outcomes for healthy child development and school readiness, as well as health visitors or midwives using interactive video guidance to improve mother-infant attachment and the child's behaviour.

Professor Mike Kelly, director of public health, said, 'Most parents provide their children with the love and care they need to grow up into happy and successful adults, no matter what their personal circumstances may be, but we know that children living in difficult circumstances, for example with parents with mental health problems, and exposed to domestic abuse are more likely to suffer emotional and behavioural problems that can have a life-long, negative effect on their future health and well-being.'

'This draft guidance responds to a real need to improve the level and quality of early education and childcare services, especially to make sure these services are readily available to those who need them most: vulnerable children and their parents.

'Our draft recommendations are based on the best available evidence and we feel they have the potential to make a real difference to ensure all children get the best possible start in life.'

The Pre-school Learning Alliance has welcomed the NICE draft guidance.

Neil Leitch, chief executive of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, said, 'We agree with NICE that high-quality childcare has an important role to play in helping vulnerable young children from disadvantaged families.

'However, rather than emphasising "school readiness", which may be interpreted by some in a prescriptive way, it would be better to focus on providing young children with the best-possible foundation for "life readiness", especially around their social and communication skills.

'If we are going to bring about serious change, then more needs to be done to involve parents too.'

-reprinted from Nursery World

Region: Europe^[2]

Tags: health^[3]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/04/guidance-well-being-under-fives-out-consultation> [2]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health>