

**How can  
the quality of living  
conditions directly  
influence young  
children?**

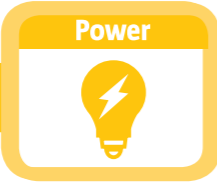
EXPLANATION

START

# INFORMATION MAP LIVING CONDITIONS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

FULL MAP

BACK TO START



How can the quality of living conditions directly influence young children?

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How can the quality of living conditions directly influence young children?

## Public space



### Lack of safe spaces to play can harm children

- Lack of safe public spaces to play can harm learning ability, especially between the ages of zero and four.
- Lack of safe spaces for play and exploration can harm children's physical development and social skills.

### Poor quality of public space can harm children's well being and social skills

- Lack of spaces for interaction, like youth clubs and community centres, can harm children's social skills.
- Unsafe public spaces prohibit children from participating in communal life, play and recreation activities.
- Crowded and chaotic public space can harm children's emotional well being due to increased stress levels.
- Lack of spaces to play that provide challenges (but no great risk) can harm children's development.

## Housing



## Water



## Power



## Soil



## Air



## Transport



## Sanitation



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## Insecure housing can harm children

- Insecure tenure can harm children's sense of safety and belonging.
- Evictions can cause traumatic experiences for children and harm their emotional stability and social skills.
- Homelessness poses a threat to children's health due to lack of shelter and facilities.

## A crowded living environment can harm children's development and well being

- Lack of space and opportunity to play in the house hampers the development of motor- and social skills.
- Noise negatively influences children's stress level and physical health, such as hormonal functioning.
- Chronic crowding leads to behavioural difficulties in school and poor academic achievement.

## Poor quality of housing poses a threat to children's health

- Poor construction quality can lead to inadequate protection from (extreme) weather conditions.
- Poor construction quality can cause injuries or death, especially in the event of natural disasters.
- Poor construction quality can lead to inadequate protection from insects and other disease carriers.
- Poor design can lead to lack of sufficient daylight.

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Lack of clean water poses a threat to children's health

- Lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation causes a range of diseases, like diarrhoea.
- Toxins and chemical pollutants in water can cause a range of health problems.
- Toxins and chemical pollutants can harm pre-natal development of the body and brain.
- Unhygienic storage of water increases the risk of contamination with pollutants.

Difficult access to clean water can harm children's learning abilities and social skills

- Time spent by children collecting clean water is lost for other activities, such as school or playing.

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**Lack of power sources poses a threat to children's safety and development**

- Lack of light can harm children's development by preventing them from playing and learning.
- Lack of light poses a threat to children's safety when moving and playing around the house.
- Lack of adequate power for cooking and preserving food can lead to malnutrition.
- Lack of power can cause extreme and harmful physical discomfort (extreme heat or cold).

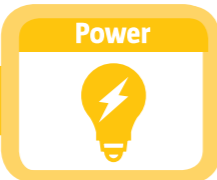
**Unsafe power-infrastructure poses a threat to children's safety and health**

- Power lines and power stations that are accessible to children can lead to physical injuries.
- Radiation can harm the pre-natal body and brain.

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## Contaminated soil poses a threat to children's health

- Soil that has been contaminated with toxic chemicals can cause health problems and harm development.
- Contaminated soil has been associated with preterm delivery.

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## Poor indoor air quality poses a threat to children's health

- Poor indoor air quality may contribute to respiratory diseases.
- Damp air caused by lack of ventilation leads to moulds that can harm children's brain development.
- Tobacco smoke damages children's respiratory system, leading to illnesses like asthma and pneumonia.
- Poor indoor air quality has been associated with pre-term delivery.

## Air pollution poses a threat to children's health

- Outdoor air pollution, for example by traffic or industry, contributes to respiratory diseases.
- Air pollution has been associated with pre-term delivery.



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Poor infrastructure can pose a threat to children's safety and social skills

- Dangerous traffic can lead to physical injuries, such as when playing.
- Lack of safe modes of transportation can prevent children from exploring and participating in community life.

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**Lack of adequate sanitation systems poses a threat to children's health and well-being**

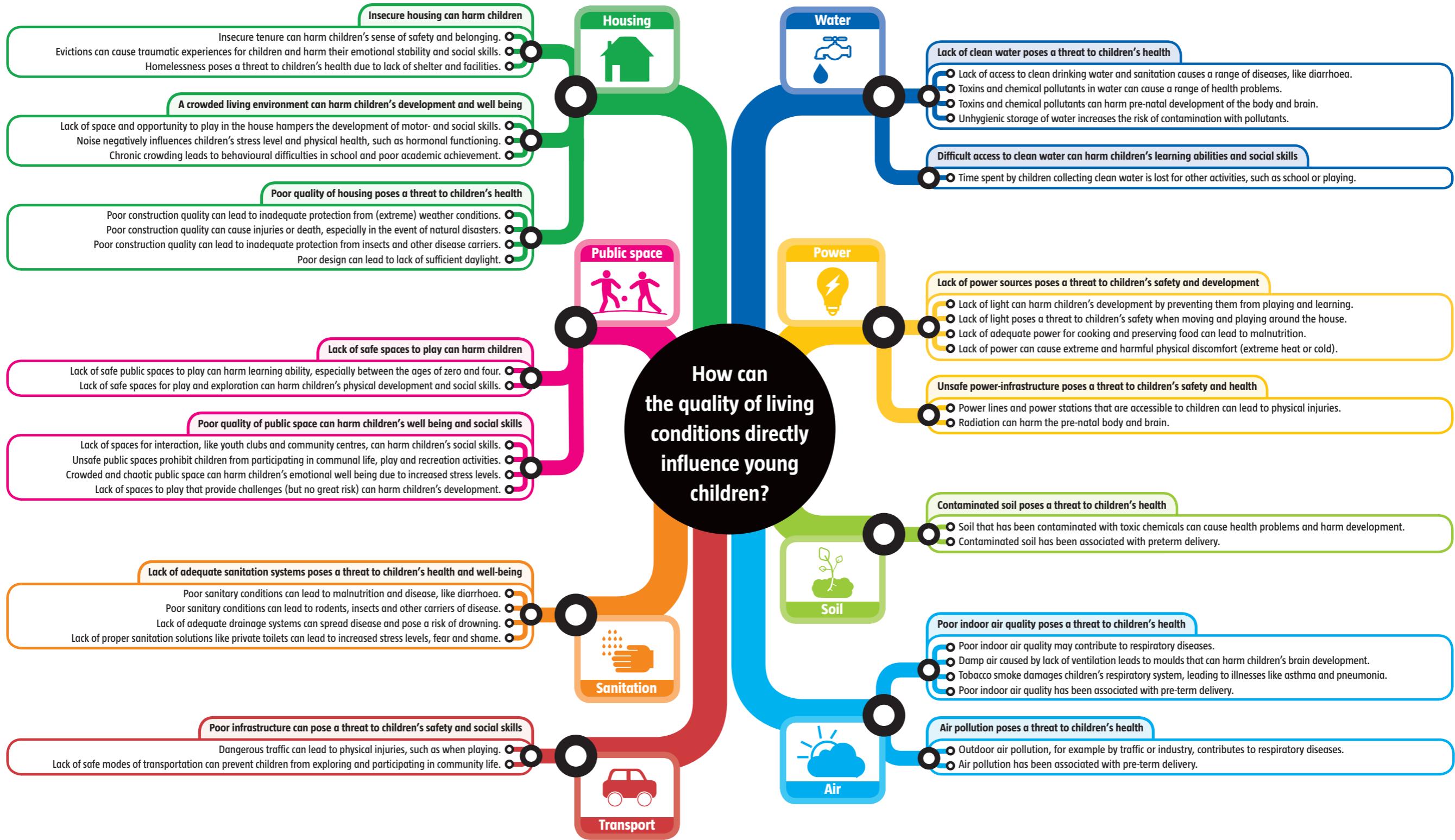
- Poor sanitary conditions can lead to malnutrition and disease, like diarrhoea.
- Poor sanitary conditions can lead to rodents, insects and other carriers of disease.
- Lack of adequate drainage systems can spread disease and pose a risk of drowning.
- Lack of proper sanitation solutions like private toilets can lead to increased stress levels, fear and shame.

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The Bernard van Leer Foundation aims to improve opportunities for children who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. This Information Map concerns children from minus nine months to age eight. This map focuses on the direct influences of children's living conditions and doesn't include second order effects. Additionally, the influence of the living conditions on care-givers (often parents) is not explicitly mentioned. However, many aspects of the living conditions influence care-givers. For example, crowded living conditions heighten stress levels and so increase the risk of domestic violence; difficult access to drinking water means much time is spent by care-givers collecting it. This Information Map was made by The Argumentation Factory, on the basis of literature study and a meeting with international experts. We thank all participants for their contribution.



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