

The First 1000 Days

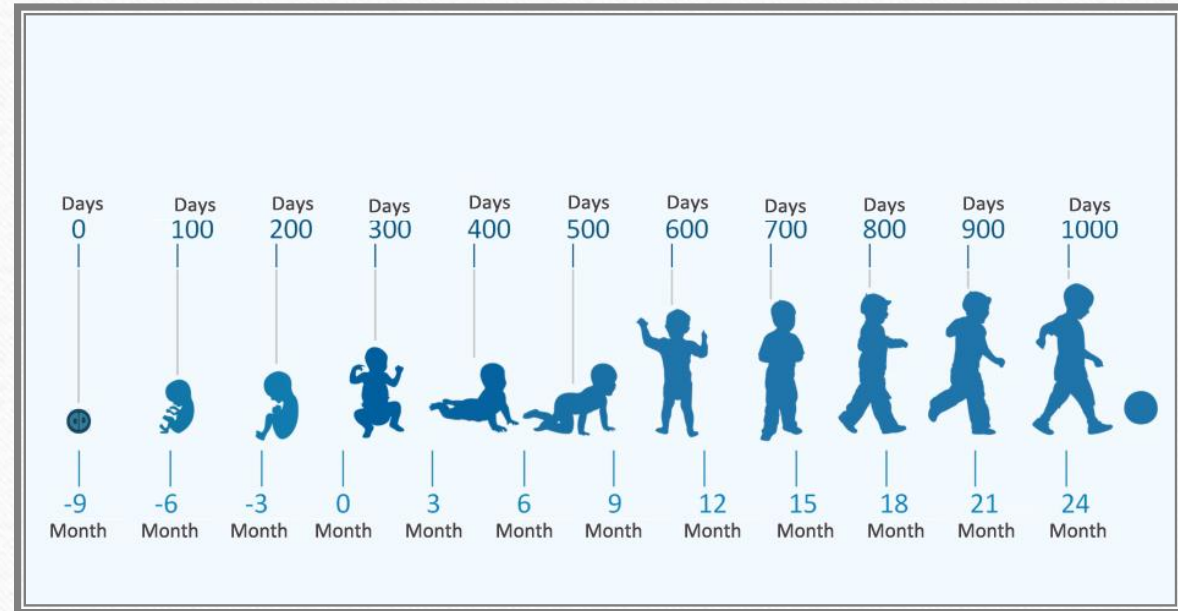
Bethan Haf Phillips

2312265

INTRODUCTION

According to House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (2019), the first 1000 days of life are from conception to the age of two. This is a critical period of a child's life as it forms the foundations of a child's development.

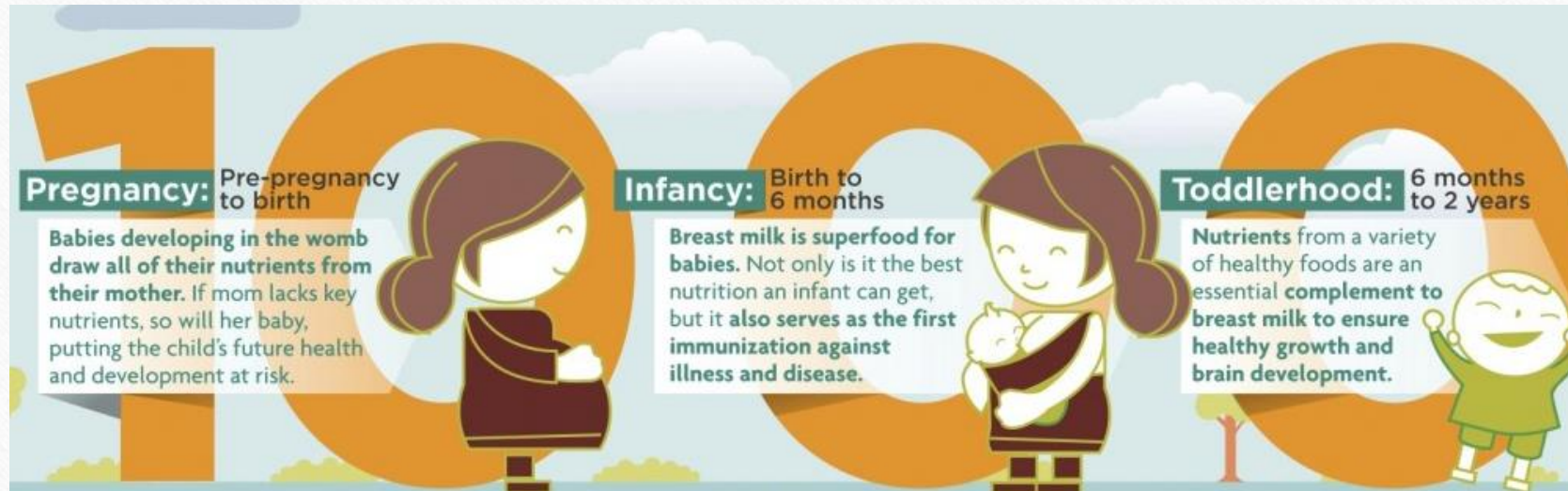
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2DN2iUnvI4> - (Guardian News, 2017). The YouTube link from Guardian News shows an introduction to first 1000 days of life and what it entails. During the video, the narrator speaks about 'stunting'. This happens when a child does not get enough nutrition when they are young which will then prevent their brain and body developing properly. Stunting will affect a child for the rest of their life.



(IDSMED, 2019)

The image shows a timeline of how old each child is at a certain number of days within the first 1000 days. It starts off at zero days where the child has just been conceived and builds up to the 1000th day where they turn 24 months old. Throughout the scrapbook, it will go into more depth about each stage and will look at caregiving, professional partnerships, challenges and different activities for children at these ages.

(Jinga Life, 2017)



The image above shows the three different stages of the first 1000 days of life. These three stages (pregnancy, infancy and toddlerhood) are important for all aspects of growth and development. During the pregnancy stage which is pre-pregnancy to birth, the child requires appropriate nutrients from the mother to be able to develop.

During the infancy stage which is from birth to 6 months, mothers can provide breast milk for the child which is a nutrition but also helps as immunisation against illnesses and diseases.

The final stage is toddlerhood which is from 6 months to 2 years, this area is important for children as they gain nutrients from various solid foods, not only breast milk. The nutrients they take in allow for healthy growth and further brain development.

Cambridge Dictionary says that care is “the process of protecting someone or something and providing what that person or thing needs” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). From the same source, Cambridge says that the meaning of the word ‘exceptional’ is “much greater than usual, especially in skill, intelligence, quality, etc”. After combining these two definitions, exceptional care is caring for a person to a high standard.

CAREGIVING

The picture attached shows all fifty-four rights of the child. Article 3 is based on the best interests of the child and article 6 is based on life, survival and development (United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, n.d.). Both human rights mentioned above have a link to exceptional care as every child has the right to be cared for to their best interest and the right to be cared for exceptionally to develop.



(Play Scotland, n.d.)

CAREGIVING

Midwife

Midwives will support parents and babies after they are born by helping the parent choose what form of feeding they would prefer for their child. Midwives also carry out newborn physical exams within the first 72 hours after birth. These tests check for signs of jaundice, infection of the umbilical cord or eyes and thrush in the mouth. The midwife will arrange a schedule of visits to the home within the first 10 days to monitor the baby and the parents' well-being (NHS, 2020).

Parents

Parents provide care for children from the day of conception. From day one they supply vital nutrition which helps growth and development before birth. Once the baby is born, parents support children by helping them achieve their different milestones. Some examples of milestones are crawling, walking and talking. As a child grows older, parents educate and prepare them for pre-school and choose the correct settings for them to attend. Parents are the first connections a child has and are their primary caregivers.

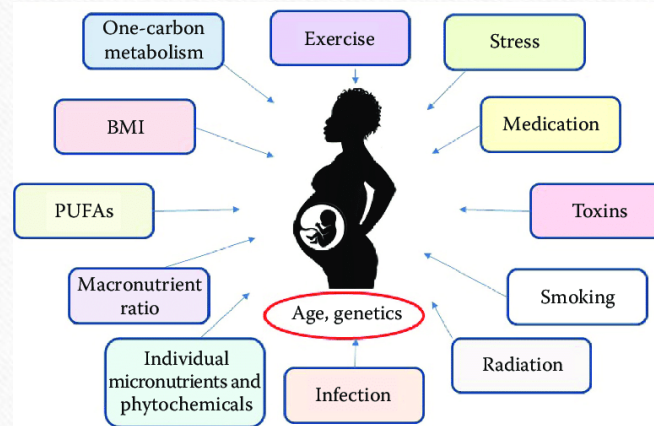
Social Worker

Social workers are trained specialists who are there to support children and families in difficult circumstances. As part of the process, they establish safe and stable environments for children, assess risks, provide support to parents and build relationships with other key members of the family. As a social worker, they play an important role in caring for the children and families in need (GOV.UK, 2023).

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

A practitioner's role is to have an effective, meaningful and genuine relationship with both parents and those who hold a parental responsibility (Brodie, 2018, p.207).

Practitioners rely on information from parents about their babies such as care routines, food and soothing techniques. For practitioners to effectively carry out their roles they should be able to communicate with parents and be able to meet the care and educational needs of the child. (ibid, p.207)



Practitioners can often be known as enabling adults. These are people who are communicators, leaders, educators and facilitators. An enabling adult creates an environment that is rich in communication and model a positive approach to learning (Welsh Government, 2021). Being an enabling adult means partnerships between families are important and need to be professional as practitioners enable families to feel confident and offer support to them for the child to thrive.

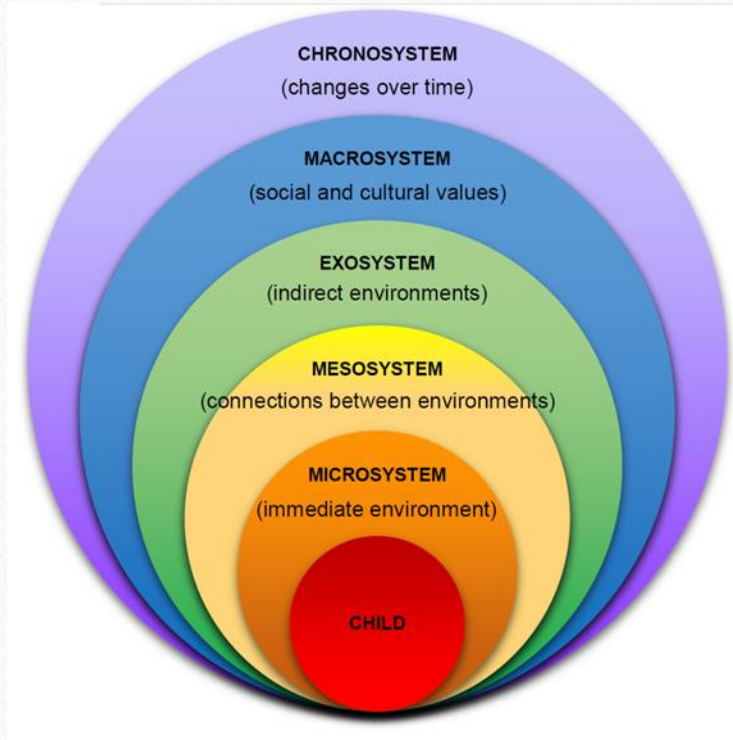
(ResearchGate, n.d.)

Throughout a mother's pregnancy, there are several factors that could impact the development of a child in the womb from the day of conception up until they are 1000 days old. The image shows that age and genetics are one of the biggest maternal factors that may hinder development. Both could lead to health issues for the child before they are born which could then affect their cognitive and physical development. Some other examples are stress, infection, medication, smoking and exercise. Between these five examples, they can all have major implications on the child if not done or taken correctly. In some cases, it may lead to miscarriages.

BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL THEORY

(Deirdre Budzyna, n.d.)

Bronfenbrenner's theory links with effective partnership working in the first 1000 days as those who are involved with the child within that time frame should consider how a child will develop. For example, families and practitioners could communicate to ensure the child is learning in the correct environment and practitioners could offer guidance to families based on different characteristics that a child requires. Some examples of these characteristics are the ability to self-regulate, play and explore and think creatively (Birth To 5 Matters, n.d.).

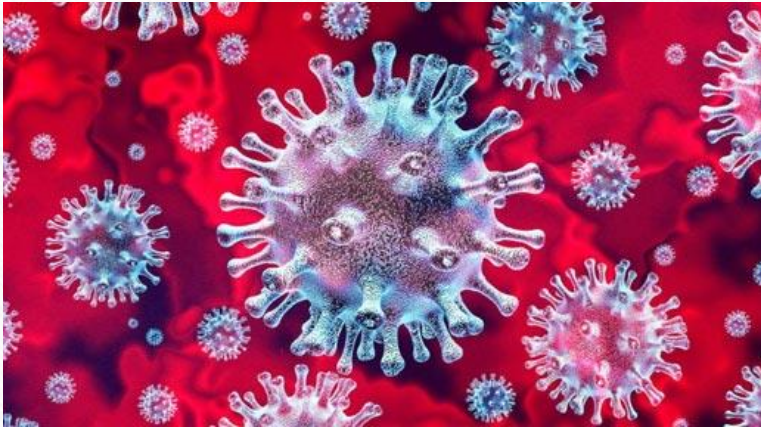


Urie Bronfenbrenner created an ecological model based on systems and interactions that shape human growth and behaviour. His whole model outlines the importance of the environment, characteristics and factors that shape development (Main, 2023).

There are five different systems in the theory which are all based around the child. These are microsystem, meosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

CHALLENGES

Whilst providing care, practitioners and families can sometimes come across challenges which would hinder the ability to carry out high quality care. Some challenges which will be looked at in more depth are Covid-19, funding for training and the mental health of parents.



(Royal College of General Practitioners, n.d.)

COVID-19

In a document that was released by The Sutton Trust, they discuss the impact that the pandemic has had on parents. Statistics show that 64% of parents have been worried about their child's development and wellbeing due to COVID-19. Another 20% of parents felt that their child's physical development had been negatively impacted. Finally, 51% of parents felt that the government had not done enough to support pre-school age children development during the pandemic ((Montacute and Holt-White, 2021). The document summarises that the pandemic has had a big impact on young children and the statistics above show that. Parents were concerned about children not having the skills required to start school.

CHALLENGES

FUNDING FOR TRAINING

Throughout the early years sector, a challenge can sometimes be a lack of funding for practitioners to develop their professional skills and gain further qualifications.

Some early childhood education settings are facing challenges of both affordability and availability. An article by the UK Parliament talks about underfunding of the early years and has left settings unable to develop practitioners (UK Parliament, 2023).

In the same article, the UK Parliament have discussed the challenges of recruitment in settings, which could be due to lack of funding.

Another article written by 'Nursery World' raises the discussion of early years settings struggling to access funding for the continuing rise of children with special educational needs. Many settings struggle with accessing extra funding which alone does not cover the cost of staffing. A statistic shows that 40% of providers care for children with special educational needs, but do not receive any extra funding (Gaunt, 2022).

CHALLENGES

Mental Health of the Parent

Parents with parents with mental health problems sometimes require assistance from family members or professionals to help them care for the child. Some health problems that may occur are depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder.

An example of a challenge that NSPCC Learning mentions is if a parent is in financial difficulty. This can have a negative effect on the mental wellbeing. If a parent is coping with many challenges at once, it can make it difficult for them to provide the care that the child needs (NSPCC Learning, 2021).

The Impact

Some experiences that parents may go through which bring on mental health problems can be divorce, unemployment, poor housing, domestic abuse or substance misuse.

Babies and young children rely on parents to nurture and care for them to grow. If a parent experiences a mental health problem during the child's first year of life, it can cause issues with the bond that they have with the child (NSPCC Learning, 2021).

Support

Practitioners can identify when a parent is struggling and can open appropriate support for them. Some ways that parents and children can be supported is by mentoring so that children can discuss their parents health, peer support, speaking out and family support groups (NSPCC Learning, 2021).

(My Baby Nursery, n.d.)



<https://youtu.be/2jDAZTCS3Cc>

Also attached is a short clip outlining the Pikler Triangle. Towards the end of the clip, the narrator speaks about the developmental benefits for the child.

(The Montessori Room, 2023)

ACTIVITIES

Pikler Triangle

The Pikler Triangle was designed by Hungarian paediatrician, Emmi Pikler. She studied the needs of babies and toddlers and encouraged the freedom of movement. During her research, she summarised seven key principles which are uninterrupted playtime, slow down, build trust, undivided attention, free movements, respect and “with” and not “to” (Kayir, in Ari 2022).

The triangle that has been created allows for all seven principles to be completed by the child. One of Pikler’s principles discusses children having the freedom move in their play. She develops the idea that children should not be forced into positions that they cannot get into themselves. The triangle allows for babies and toddlers to pull themselves up on the frame when they are ready to do so themselves and begin exploring.

Similarly to the loose parts activity on the following page, the Pikler Triangle would also be used in a Montessori setting as it encourages children to become independent, freely move and learn in different ways.

Loose Parts

Loose parts play creates a greater environment for children which allows them to do what they would like to do, follow their interests and be curious. An environment full of loose parts allows children to experiment, enjoy and discover things out for themselves. Loose parts was first discovered by Simon Nicholson in article he wrote named *The Theory of Loose Parts: How NOT to Cheat Children*.

Loose Parts provision can be made up of several different objects. These are items such as natural resources, building materials, scrap materials such as old tyres and sometimes random found objects (Casey and Robertson, 2019, pp.5–6).

Loose parts play has a big connection with Montessori education as children can use any parts that they have to . Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, coined a theory that emphasises children to self-pace learn and individually instruction themselves. Montessori believes that education should be unique to children's needs and interests (Porter, 2022).



(Child Care Provider Resource Network , n.d.)

It benefits children and provides meaningful learning as it is self-directed, hand-on learning and collaborative play. Loose parts gives children the opportunity to explore freely in play.

(The Forest School, n.d.)

Forest School



<https://youtu.be/5qCN0JHeR-Y> (Forest School Association, 2021)

The above link briefly outlines what Forest School is how activities that children undertake benefits them. Forest School Association mentions that the environment is a child-centred and offers opportunities for holistic growth. Holistic growth is the social, emotional, physical, mental and intellectual growth of a child (HEI Schools, 2022). It supports play, exploration and risk-taking, along with developing confidence and self-esteem.

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

When children are participating in Forest School, there are 6 principles and all learners are:

- Equal and unique
- Capable of exploring and discovering
- Able to initiate their own learning and development
- Entitled to experience regular success
- Able to develop positive relationships
- Capable of developing strong and positive relationships with the natural world. (Forest School Association, 2021)

Forest School develops discipline, self-awareness, teamwork, independence and confidence whilst carrying out activities such as shelter building, campfire cooking, den building and tree climbing.

Reggio Emilia

The Reggio Emilia approach is a philosophy by founder Loris Malaguzzi which creates an image of a child with potential to develop and learn through the hundred languages that belong to human beings (Reggio Emilia Approach, 2019).

There are six fundamental principles of Reggio Emilia which include the child being centre of the image, the hundred languages, the role of the teacher, reciprocal relationships, pedagogy of listening and the environment being the third teacher (The Reggio Approach, n.d.).

Two examples which will be discussed is the environment as the third teacher and the hundred languages of children.

The three teachers in a child's life are their parents, the class teachers and the environments. The child is the center image and with all three teachers involved in the child's life, it allows them to work together to support the child's development. Each child requires meaningful interactions with all three (The Reggio Approach, n.d.).

The hundred languages of a child's life is seen as being different ways that children experience the world and express themselves. The child is the instigator of the learning process.

(Nido Early School, n.d.)



REGGIO EMILIA CONTINUED

The images show a range of different Reggio Emilia settings and how they are usually set up for children. The settings contain neutral colours and are inclusive for all children to use. The layout is accessible for children to go and explore learn independently. The images show children being able to use loose parts play and engaging in activities with practitioners which encourage child-centred learning and discovering.



(Ozuna, 2022)



(Community Play Things, 2019)



Community Play Things,
2019)

Compare

Both Forest School and Reggio Emilia are similar settings to each other as they both encourage child led play and allow children to build relationships. In Forest Schools, children are given the opportunity to build positive relationships, this could be with practitioners or other children. Similarly, at Reggio Emilia settings, children are given the opportunities to build reciprocal relationships. Again, this could be with both practitioners or children.

Another comparison of Forest School and Reggio Emilia is the setting itself. Both settings are very natural which allows for holistic growth and inclusive practice. Inclusive practice is an approach that recognises the differences between children which allows them to access content which ensures they partake in their learning to best possible standard (Collier, 2019).

Contrast

A difference between Forest School and a Reggio Emilia setting is that Forest Schools supports and encourages risk taking, whereas Reggio Emilia does not. Although Reggio Emilia mentions the environment being the third teacher, it is unlikely that child would take risks in the setting like they would in a Forest School when campfire cooking or tree climbing. Another contrast between both settings is the type of learning they do. At a Forest School, all learning is done entirely outside. At a Reggio Emilia setting, learning is done within a class setting. Although both have similar approaches and views, learning in both are done in completely different ways.

REFERENCE LIST

Birth To 5 Matters. (n.d.). *Learners for life: Characteristics of Effective Learning – Birth To 5 Matters*. [online] Available at: <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/learners-for-life-characteristics-of-effective-learning/> [Accessed: 14 Jan. 2024].

Brodie, K. (2018). *The holistic care and development of children from birth to three : an essential guide for students and practitioners*. [online] Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, p.207. Available at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/trinity/reader.action?docID=5257704&ppg=220> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2024].

Cambridge Dictionary (2019). *CARE* | *meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary*. [online] Cambridge.org. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/care> [Accessed 19 Jan. 2024].

Casey, T. and Robertson, J. (2019). *Loose Parts Play*. [online] pp.5–6. Available at: https://www.playscotland.org/resources/print/Loose-Parts-Play-Toolkit-Revised.pdf?plsctl_id=10924 [Accessed: 17 Jan. 2024].

Child Care Provider Resource Network (n.d.). *Loose Parts Play*. Available at: <https://ccprn.com/loose-parts-play/> [Accessed: 17 Jan. 2024].

Collier, E. (2019). *What is Inclusive practice?* [online] The Hub | High Speed Training. Available at: <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/what-is-inclusive-practice/> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2024].

Community Play Things (2019). *The power of purposeful pre-school environments*. Available at: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/the-power-of-purposeful-preschool-environments> [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2024].

Deirdre Budzyna (n.d.). *Ecological Theory*. Available at: <https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/whole-child/chapter/ecological-theory-2/> [Accessed: 13 Jan. 2024].

Forest School Association (2021). *What is Forest School? | Forest School Association*. [online] Forest School Association. Available at: <https://forestschoolassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/> [Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024].

Gaunt, C. (2022). *Early years settings struggle to access funding for rising numbers of young children with SEND*. [online] Nursery World. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/early-years-settings-struggle-to-access-funding-for-rising-numbers-of-young-children-with-send> [Accessed: 18 Jan. 2024].

GOV.UK (2023). *Social Work Week: How to Become a Child and Family Social Worker - the Education Hub*. [online] educationhub.blog.gov.uk. Available at: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/03/21/social-work-week-how-to-become-a-child-and-family-social-worker/> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2024].

Guardian News (2017). *The first 1,000 days: their impact on a child's future, narrated by Jay Rayner*. [online] www.youtube.com. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2DN2iUnvI4> [Accessed: 10 Jan. 2024].

REFERENCE LIST

HEI Schools (2022). *What is Holistic Development?* Available at: <https://www.heischools.com/blog/what-is-holistic-development> [Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024].

House of Commons (2019). *First 1000 days of life*. [online] p.3; Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhealth/1496/1496.pdf> [Accessed: 10 Jan. 2024].

IDS MED (2019). *What is the first 1,000 days of life?* Available at: <https://www.idsmmed.com/news/what-is-the-first-1000-days-of-life/462.html> [Accessed: 12 Jan. 2024].

Jinga Life (2017). *The Power of The First 1,000 DAYS*. Available at: <https://www.jinga.life/blog/the-power-of-the-first-1000-days> [Accessed: 11 Jan. 2024].

Kayir, G. (2022) *'Emmi Pikler's approach to early childhood education' in Ari, A. (2022) Student friendly teaching approaches*. New Castle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing [Accessed: 16 Jan. 2024]

Main, P. (2023). *Bronfenbrenner's ecological model*. [online] Structural Learning. Available at: <https://www.structural-learning.com/post/bronfenbrenners-ecological-model> [Accessed: 14 Jan. 2024].

Montacute, R. and Holt-White, E. (2021). *Views on the ground from parents, providers and teachers*. [online] Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Views-on-the-ground-from-parents-providers-and-teachers.pdf> [Accessed: 18 Jan. 2024].

REFERENCE LIST

Montessori Northwest (n.d.). *About Montessori Education*. [online] Montessori Education. Available at: <https://montessorinw.org/about-montessori-education#:~:text=Montessori%20is%20a%20method%20of> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2024].

My Baby Nursery (n.d.). Available at: <https://mybabynursery.com.au/what-age-is-the-pikler-triangle-for/> [Accessed: 16 Jan. 2024].

NHS (2020). *Early days*. [online] nhs.uk. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/after-the-birth/early-days/#:~:text=A%20children> [Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024].

Nido Early School (n.d.). *Everything You Need To Know About The Reggio Emilia Approach*. Available at: <https://nido.edu.au/news/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-reggio-emilia-approach/> [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2024].

NSPCC Learning (2021). *Parental mental health problems*. [online] NSPCC Learning. Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/parental-mental-health-problems/#article-top> [Accessed: 18 Jan. 2024].

Ozuna, S. (2022). *How to set up a classroom inspired by Reggio Emilia | Community Playthings*. [online] www.communityplaythings.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/drawing-from-the-reggio-emilia-approach> [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2024].

REFERENCE LIST

Play Scotland (n.d.). *Child-friendly UNCRC Poster leaflet*. Available at:

https://www.playscotland.org/resources/crc_poster_leaflet_final-indd_/ [Accessed 19 Jan. 2024].

Porter, D. (2022). *What is Maria Montessori Theory?* [online] Rockingham, Montessori School. Available at:

<https://rms.wa.edu.au/what-is-maria-montessori-theory/#:~:text=The%20Maria%20Montessori%20Theory%20is> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2024].

Reggio Emilia Approach (2019). *Reggio Emilia Approach*. [online] Reggiochildren.it. Available at:

<https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/> [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2024].

ResearchGate (n.d.). *Epigenetics, Nutrition, and Infant Health - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate*. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Potential-maternal-factors-impacting-the-fetal-epigenome_fig2_320260466 [Accessed: 14 Jan. 2024].

Royal College of General Practitioners (n.d.). *COVID-19*. Available at: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/learning-resources/covid-19>

[Accessed: 18 Jan. 2024].

The Forest School (n.d.). *What is Forest School?* Available at: <https://www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk/what-is-forest-school/>

[Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024].

REFERENCE LIST

The Montessori Room (2023). *What is a Pikler Triangle and is it a Montessori Material?* [online] [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jDAZTCS3Cc). Available at: <https://youtu.be/2jDAZTCS3Cc> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2024].

The Reggio Approach (n.d.). *Reggio: Philosophy and principles*. [online] [thereggioapproach.weebly.com](https://thereggioapproach.weebly.com/reggio-philosophy-and-principles.html#:~:text=The%20fundamental%20principles%20of%20the). Available at: <https://thereggioapproach.weebly.com/reggio-philosophy-and-principles.html#:~:text=The%20fundamental%20principles%20of%20the> [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2024].

UK Parliament (2023). *Support for childcare and the early years – Report Summary*. [online] UK Parliament. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmeduc/969/summary.html> [Accessed: 18 Jan. 2024].

United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (n.d.). *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. [online] UNICEF UK. Available at: https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/?sisearchengine=284&siproduct=Campaign_G_02_Our_Work&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA2KitBhCIARIsAPPM EhLcEzZGq0muMdJnu9WucrJQMAI_32WWwqgIYDmioWj8Ak0VsuxqSFAaAsE7EALw_wcB [Accessed: 19 Jan. 2024].

Welsh Government (2021a) *Consultation Document: A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings*. Available at: [curriculum-funded-non-maintained-settings-consultation-doc.pdf](https://gov.wales/curriculum-funded-non-maintained-settings-consultation-doc.pdf) (gov.wales) [Accessed: 14 Jan. 2024].