



THE FIRST 1000 DAYS SCRAPBOOK.

Introduction.



According to The Oxford Learners Dictionary (2021), the meaning of Exceptional is “Unusually good”. What does this look like in Child Care and Education?

When looking into childcare for babies for example private nurseries or in Wales, Flying Starts, there are a number of important aspects to look at. This scrapbook will highlight some of the most important aspects to help with a child’s Care, development and learning in the first 1000 days.

Nature and Nurture



According to the House of Commons, Health and Social Care Committee (2019), The first 1000 days from conception to two years old is important as it is during this time a child's body, brain and immune system develops more quickly than at any other time and can affect their health and development in future years. Kathy Brodie (2018) and Pregnancy, birth, and baby, (2019) agrees.

From conception, when a female egg and a male sperm unite to make a single cell called a zygote, we get fifty percent of the mothers' genes and fifty percent of the fathers' genes, yet our genes are unique to us. Nature is based on our hereditary characteristics such as, our size, eye colour, hair colour and even if we are shy or outgoing. Nurture is based on the experiences children have in environments and with other children or adults that can have influence on their development (Doherty J and Hughes M, 2009b).

Exceptional care from conception should start with making the perfect environment in the womb, creating the best environment for the baby starts with the environment outside it. There should be a positive, peaceful, and happy atmosphere in the household and there should be sunlight and fresh air. Instrumental and soft music can help to sculpture your baby's mind and soothe your baby, as in the ninth week of pregnancy the baby's hearing begins to develop. Diet is a main aspect of pregnancy, eating healthy and avoiding junk food helps to create an ideal environment for the start of the 1000 days. (First Cry Parenting 2018) Pregnancy and childbirth are considered life changing events for a woman and her family, maternity staff should be able to positively support women and their families at this time. In 2019 The Welsh Government issued a document titled Maternity Care in Wales, a five-year vision for the future, they state in this document that "Pregnancy and childbirth are a safe and positive experience, and parents are supported to give their child the best start in life"

This document includes their five principles, 1) Family Centred Care 2) Safe and e

Effective Care 3) Continuity of Care 4) Skilled Multi Professional Teams 5) Sustainable Quality Services. These five principles ensure that the women and their families be respectfully treated and be listened to. All women should be assigned a named midwife to build a trusting relationship and ensure continuity through the pregnancy. By providing equity in all Welsh maternity services, individual and appropriate care can be ensured (The Welsh Government 2019).

Communication is the purpose of learning language, whether it is verbal or non-verbal, such as sign language, it is the way that we transmit information and how we interact with others to show how we feel or what we need. One of the development milestones for a child is language. Learning to speak can be difficult but as most children show, they can be capable and competent communicators in the first 1000 days. From birth babies will make sounds like crying to communicate and to show they have a basic need that needs to be met or smiling to show that they are happy. The parents or guardians will quickly learn the meaning of their child's different communication types (Doherty J and Hughes M, 2009).

Kathy Brodie (2018) agrees and states that the stages of language development are

- Birth to Six months: Babies will turn toward sounds, start to make noises and watch faces.
- Six to Twelve months: Babies will babble and hold proto conversations.
- Twelve to Eighteen months: Babies will understand words, simple instructions and gestures.
- Eighteen to Twenty-four months: Babies will understand 200 words or more and be using 50 or more words of their own.
- Two to Three-year-olds will use around 300 words and create sentences.

One of the development milestones for a child is language.

B.F. Skinner an American psychologist born in 1904 states that one way of learning is through operant conditioning, this is where learning through repetitive speech, actions or behaviours are punished or rewarded. Words that are reinforced positively by parents, guardians or carers could gradually shape children's speech. Bandura's Social Learning Theory disagrees with Skinner and proposed that learning occurs through observation, babies and children listen to what the adults and siblings say in their surroundings and then copy the words to make sentences and conversation and communicate (Doherty J and Hughes M, 2009a).

When a child has started to learn how to talk, they may be observed doing Self-Talk, this is when then talk to themselves about what they are doing, or how they solve a problem. They also do this to keep from getting distracted, an example of problem solving is when a child is starting to build a tower from wooden or plastic blocks, they could say 'more', this shows that they have worked out that they need more bricks to make a taller tower or longer road, if they say 'all gone' when the box is empty, they could be thinking that the box is the only place where they can get the blocks. Self-talk can be taken on into school and in adult hood as repeating what you need to yourself makes you less likely to forget what it is you need while doing other things (Kathy Brodie 2018).

Sensory toys and activities





Sensory toys and activities aid in the development of babies and children, having a wide range of toys at home or in a day care setting, means that care givers and babies can use them every day. Treasure baskets are made with natural resources and objects that can be found around the house, with sensory objects in mind and are used to help the baby learn about different textures and noises. Items are used to stimulate, explore, and develop all the senses. All items and the activities done with them should always be supervised and appeal to all the senses, as this lets the baby make choices and stops them from being frustrated, and to explore at a rate that suits them. Examples are:

- Sight: Colour and shapes.
- Smell: Natural wood.
- Touch: Rough, smooth, soft, or hard.
- Taste: Fillable pacifier.
- Hearing: Rattle, loud noise if dropped (Tops Day Nurseries 2017).

One toy can have a few different elements, a red rattle would appeal to sight and sound, a fillable pacifier would have colour, taste and be smooth to touch. Mostly all babies put whatever they have in their hands, into their mouths, the items in a treasure basket should be safe and changed regularly to be age aware, The Montessori pedagogy method has a principle about "Sensitive Periods" these periods are when children are ready to learn particular skills, the timings for these are

as individual as the child, and only lasts as long as necessary for the child to learn the skill (Supply Desk 2009).

Attachment





John Bowlby born in 1907 was the first theorist on attachment, describing it as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings." The mother or primary care giver provides

the baby with the food, warmth, and nurturance the child needs, the child then becomes attached to the mother, as their basic needs are being met. If a baby becomes a little stressed or afraid, they will try and seek out the presence of the mother or caregiver in order to feel care and comfort. Being separated from the mother can cause stress and anxiety for the child. Having a dependable caregiver gives the child a sense of security which helps enable them to explore learn and develop (Verywell Mind2019)

Secure attachment can be described as emotionally healthy, if the care giver leaves the baby, the baby will get upset or be in distress from being seperated, they can normally be settled or comforted by the care giver quite quickly as soon as the baby sees and is held by the care giver (Kathy Brodie 2018)

Indoor and Outdoor play





Play is a key aspect of development and learning. Kathy Brodie(2019b) explains to us the importance of “Tummy Time” this is where babies from 10 weeks old are placed on their tummies on a carpet, this helps build strength in the neck and core stability in the trunk, which is key in building arm and leg movements and will help support the body as it grows.

Dr Emmi Pikler was an Austrian, born in 1902, she was a paediatrician who came up with the Pikler Approach, it has seven key principles based on two ideals, that relationships are respectful to children and, the freedom of movement favouring the development stage of the child. The seven key principles are:

- Respect.
- Build Trust.
- ‘With’ not ‘To’.
- Slow Down.
- Uninterrupted Playtime.
- Free Movement.
- Undivided Attention.

When participating in activities with a baby, talking through and showing different actions helps the baby to understand and will be more likely to cooperate.

Respecting and responding to a baby's verbal and physical cues has an effect on their sense of identity and self-worth and will be more likely to respond to commands or requests in later life. Building trust when interacting with a baby while feeding, bathing, or changing, helps the baby learn to become an active partner. When participating in activities with a baby, talking through and showing different actions helps the baby to understand and will be more likely to cooperate. Dr Pikler observed that a child could relax and focus more in a slow and peaceful environment. Stress from overstimulation can affect not only the baby but also the parent. Dr Pikler believed that babies should have interrupted playtime as this gives them time and space to explore their toys and environment at their own pace and are capable of doing this on their own. Free movement is letting the baby get into positions on their own, by placing the baby on their tummy, they will learn to roll over or stretch to reach an item they want. Multi-tasking should be avoided when participating in activities with a baby, giving them undivided attention when playing or meeting their basic needs helps them learn how to focus and be engaged, for example, while feeding, changing, singing nursery rhymes, or listening to stories. (Oskar's Wooden Ark 2020) These seven principles could be looked upon as exceptional care in the baby's first 1000 days from the mother or care giver.

Enabling Adult





Dr Pikler's seven key principles can be used by the enabling adult as this shows the progress of learning, creating a safe environment and letting the baby develop at their own individual rate. Being an enabling adult is important for communication, verbal or physical, helping babies learn to speak or convey what they need. Enabling adults need to have good communication, (Welsh Government Enabling Pathways 2021) for example, between parent and practitioner, so that a baby's needs and development are shared, so that the baby would feel comfortable in a new surrounding, such as day care and with an adult that is not its parent.

Different countries will have different approaches to what they think is important, to the child and what their best interests are and put these at the centre of learning and development.

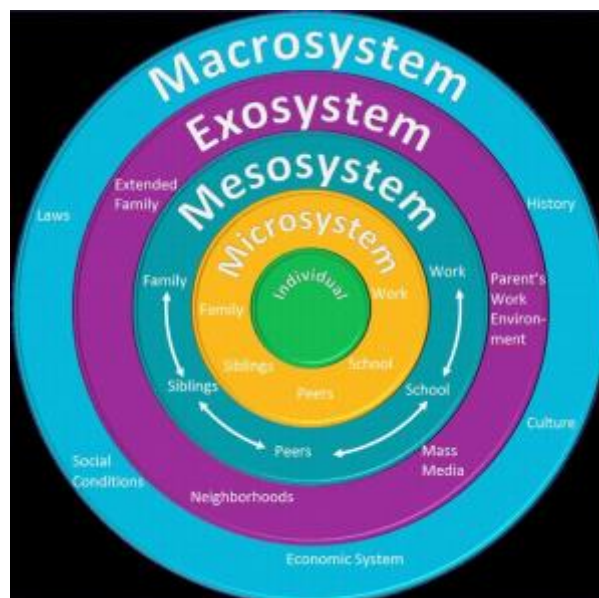
New Zealand has Te Whāriki which is based on their culture. Te Whāriki or the Woven Mat is described by The Ministry of Education, New Zealand (2017) as "While the upper side of a whāriki

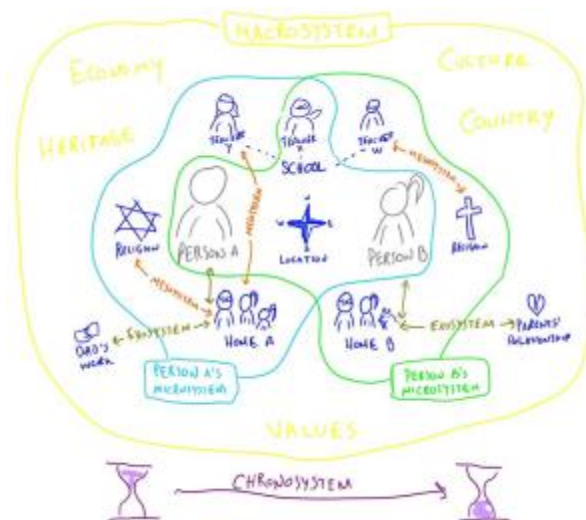
displays the weaver's artistry it is the underside that reveals their mastery. Expert weavers will examine the foundations for planning and technique. If these are sound, the quality will be seen on the face-up side" The enabling adults believe that every child is born with potential and quality learning in the early years, help their children realise their potential and strong foundations are built for later learning. The Welsh Government have an improved curriculum coming into force In September 2022, this new curriculum has been developed by practitioners from across wales, including primary and secondary schools, schools that were urban and rural, special, bilingual and religious. The new curriculum has 4 purposes, for children to be, 1) Ambitious capable learners, 2) Enterprising creative contributors, 3) Ethical informed citizens of Wales and the World, 4) Healthy confident individuals. This new curriculum is for the ages 3 to 16 which does not include the first 1000 days. (Welsh Government 2020).

Brofenbrenner's Mesosystem has concentric circles with the baby at the centre of their natural environment with its parents, the enabling adults and family close to them, in the next circles are community, for example, schools, places of worship and parents' workplaces. The closer the circle is to the child the more it will have an important influence, as Brofenbrenner believes that "children do not develop in isolation" as stated by Aubrey and Riley (2018).

Coming into a playgroup or private nursery setting, the baby will have more of a community influence as they would be in contact with other children and their families. When the baby grows, the outer circles of the mesosystem become available and these influences affect the baby's learning and development (Kathy Brodie 2018)

Influences on Holistic Development





Following on from Bronfenbrenner's theory, that babies are mostly influenced by their closest family, there can be different effects from a wider society, which can be negative as well as positive, such as racism. Young children and babies need practitioners who are in the 1000 days settings to build up their resilience and self-confidence, if and when the negative influences happen.

Enabling Environment





There are three different enabling environments, Emotional, Indoor and Outdoor. Having a happy and positive emotional environment is essential for children to learn, feel safe and help them to express their feelings. When parents and practitioners have a positive attitude children pick up on it and feel safe. Indoor environments should be appropriate, interesting, and comfortable. It can be like a second home for some children, so it must feel safe for them, so they feel comfortable enough to learn and play. Books, dress up clothes and other resources should be easily accessible for children to reach themselves. Outdoor environments should be accessed daily and can be beneficial for learning. Playing outdoors means fresh air and includes risk taking, problem solving and building confidence. Quiet areas outdoors are also useful for reflection (Early Years Matters 2022). Enabling adults should ensure that the environment around the baby or toddler is safe and stimulating. Dr Pikler said, "If we give children enough space and possibilities for free movement, they will move as beautifully and gracefully as animals: nimbly, simply, confidently and naturally" By providing an

enabling environment, the first 1000 days for the child would be productive in their learning and development.

Enabling Experiences





Enabling experiences or sensory experiences are types of play that stimulates and activates all five of the baby's senses. In the first 1000 days babies take in huge amounts of information and turn it into knowledge. This type of sensory play helps create connections in the brain to support motor skills, development of language and cognitive growth (Healthline 2020) examples of sensory experiences are:

- Homemade Sound Tubes,

Empty kitchen roll tube filled with uncooked rice, beads or dried beans, sealed at both ends, creates different sounding noises while looking the same.

- Play Dough,

Making homemade sensory dough with safe ingredients, means you can add scents and colours. Babies and toddlers can spend time shaping, rolling and squeezing it.

- Homemade Musical Instruments,

Putting elastic bands around a tissue box or plastic container to make a guitar

or dried beans in a plastic cup to make maracas to create different noises

Songs and Nursery Rhymes,

Singing along to a baby's favourite song or nursery rhyme helps to develop their phonological awareness, having a simple rhythmic pattern and repetitive words, it is easy for babies to recognise, remember and repeat. Physical participation helps develop coordination and balance and the skills to follow instructions (Pacey 2019).

The singing and the making actions of nursery rhymes can be done indoors and outdoors, with outdoors giving more space for the baby or toddler to move about freely, some of the nursery rhymes that are more common in the first 1000 days are,

Incy Wincy Spider. Where the actions of hands for the spider climbing up and the rain falling down, show upwards and downwards.

One, Two, Three, Four, Five. This is where you can count along with your fingers as you sing the song.

Old McDonald Had a Farm, Making the noises of the farm animals and mimicking their behaviour, helps the baby to recognise different animals and the sounds they make.

The Wheels on the Bus, This is a nursery rhyme with lots of different actions, rolling your hands over themselves for the turning wheels, swishing your hands in front of you for the windscreen wipers, pointing your thumb over your shoulder for the driver saying “move on back”. (Firstcry Parenting 2019).

Sensory Stories,

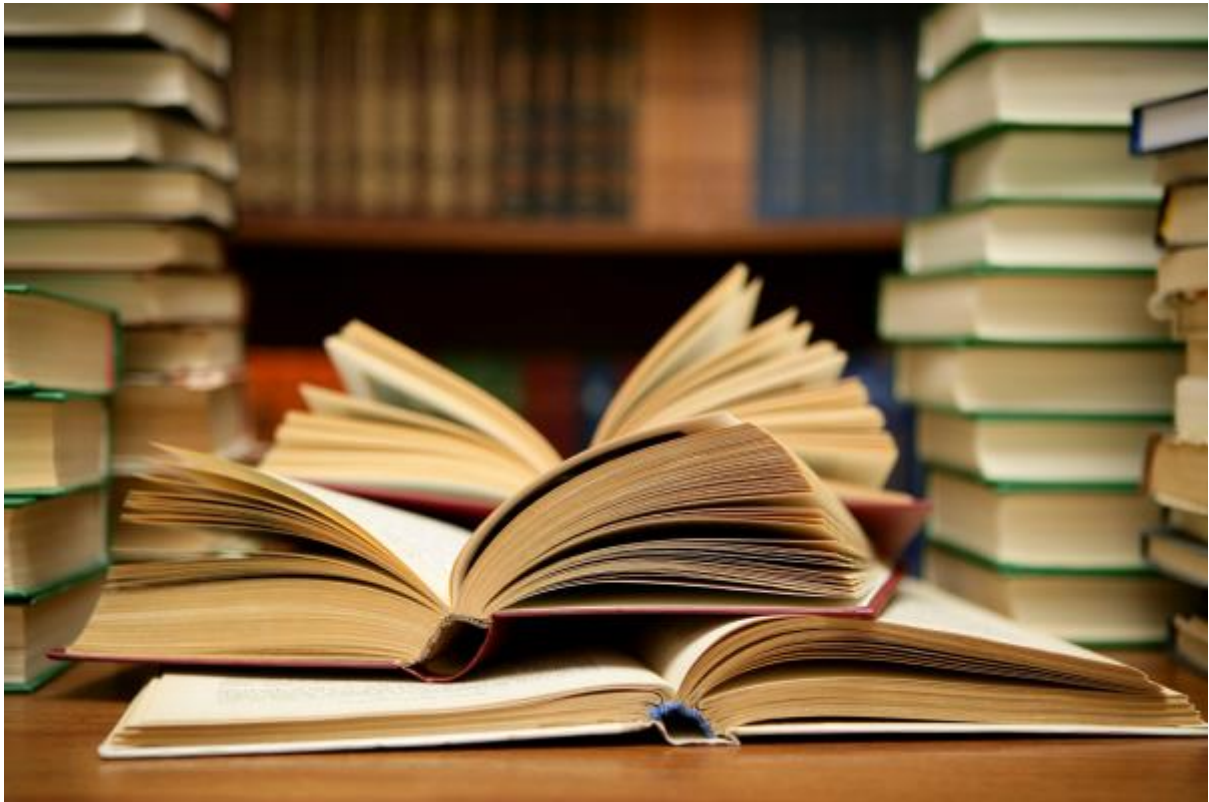
These stories are an excellent way of making sure that all babies and toddlers including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or Special Educational Needs (SEN) feel included at story telling time. A sensory story is often quite short, and a sensory stimulus is used, for example, a drum or shaker for noise or different textures and fabrics for touch. This can help with the development for responding and listening (Twinkl, no date).

Conclusion



These approaches, theories and documents show that if followed, The first 1000 Days of a baby's life can be full of exceptional care, be nurturing and interesting and give the baby the information and skills it will need to learn and develop, this will enable the child to grow in to the best person they could be in the upcoming years throughout childhood and into adulthood.

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