Professional Practise

What does exceptional care look like?

The First 100 Days

Throughout the early stages of a child's life, it is important to consider how important the first 1000 days are to a child for their holistic development. Children begin going through a stage of rapid development in which they begin to learn through play and sensory.

The period of conception to birth is an extremely important time, as the wellbeing of the mother can have an effect on the outcome of the baby. However, it is essential to remember at birth the importance of skin to skin contact. Evidence suggests that not only does skin to skin contact benefit in physical ways, but it also helps both the baby and mother mentally as it provides comfort and relaxation (UNICEF, nd).

The Importance of Respectful Care

Respectful Care is defined to be when you give the child the opportunity to learn activities and simple actions by completing it themselves. This could simply mean you observe or give simple instructions guiding them through a task, but by doing this, you allowing the child to feel a sense of independence and creating a level of respect and trust between you both.

It is also considered important that children have the opportunity of freedom of movement. Activities such as tummy time are most commonly used and encouraged by staff as it gives the child the ability to develop mentally and physically (*Tops Day nursery, 2020).*

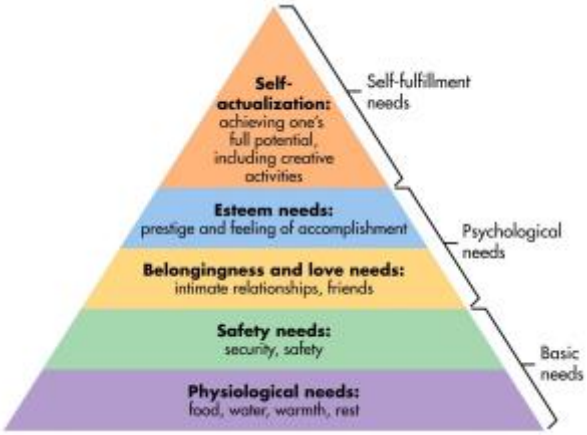
Holistic Development

The start of a child's development begins when the baby's brain begins forming within the womb. Throughout this development, a baby develops neurons, which then go on to create stronger connections during infancy. All of the connections formed throughout the early stages of the child's life is an underlying aspect of a child's development.

As suggested by Professor Paul Jones (2016), It's important for parents to understand the seriousness of children's early years development. Providing children with experiences implements their development throughout life (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2008).

1 - Neurotransmitter Synapse

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (1943) is seen as important theory as it shows the needs of an individual. His theory also shows the correct way for a child to be cared for, for the best outcome. It's believed that an individual cannot reach the self-fulfilment needs without correctly following the Hierarchy of Need. The aim is to achieve the basic needs first, and then build your way up to the final stage, which is fulfilment.



Not only is it deemed crucial for the correct interactions from the parents, but the communication from the practitioner is essential too. This is so that the child can develop their social and communication skills in the best way possible. All practitioners should appropriately communicate with the child to develop their knowledge and understanding. By doing this, it will create a bond between the child and the practitioner. Interactions like this shape and create the brain architecture, however, if the 'serve and return' interactions aren't met, it could possibly lead to brain architecture impairment. (Harvard University, 2017).

Credited theory founder Bowlby (1948) and Ainsworth founders (Van Rosmalen, L., Van der Horst, F. and Van der Veer, R, 2016) found that the child needs a stable, healthy relationship with a parent so that their development isn't affected in any way. in agreement with this, Lindon (2010) states that a child's view on life and any experiences they face may be affected if a child was to face any distressing or traumatising events.

Professional Roles

Practitioners

For children, creating relationships with practitioners is a daunting time, although it is important that the child creates that bond and a sense of familiarity, Dowling (2014).

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1976) ecological theory also implies that the environment a child is surrounded by has an effect on how a child develops throughout life. Considering this, its important to consider the environment in which you will be seeing the child will be. Although a child may feel comfortable with you, its important that the space they are in makes them feel welcomed too.

Donaldson (2015) also gives the impression that as practitioners, it is our priority to work in the correct manner with the child to form the most positive relationship.

Professional Love

If you were to consider a child's basic needs to survive, we would instantly would think of the basics such as food and water. However, if you were to think deeper, a child really needs a lot more than that, such as to be cared for, loved and respected.

The concept of professional love is a term researched by Dr. Jools Page, who states that it is related to the relationship between a practioner and the child (Dr. Ann Clare, 2016). Dr. Ann Clare (2016), carried out a survey in which 793 Practioners responded too in relation to how they personally reviewed the idea of professional love. In response to this survey, it was discovered that the majority of early years practitioners had a positive attitude towards playing a part towards professional love

within their settings. It was then stated by most that they felt able and comfortable in their position professionally to interact with a child in order to form a positive attachment, by taking part in activities such as hugging.

Enabling adults

The role of an adult in a child's life is extremely significant, Welsh Government (2021). It is the role of the adult to set the correct expectation of learning, creating safe spaces and trustworthy bonds. No matter what comes their way, its the adults responsibility to manage a child's transition and changes in life.

It is the enabling adults responsibility to care and observe the child in the correct manner. To begin, its important to allow the child to begin to learn independently, with the enabling adult their for support. However, an adult should be aware of when the correct time to intervene is.

Sensory activities within an early year setting

Sensory activities are deemed to be an important part to a child's development and growth. These types of activities are said to stimulate a child's senses in all way. Within the first 1000 days, a child begins exploring the world with their five senses (touch, taste, hearing, smell, seeing). This is the way in which a child learns the environment in which they are in and experiencing the world around them. This is an opportunity for play to support a child's development with their engagement and observation skills, cognitive growth and their interactions.

Sensory Bins

Begin by filling small tubs with objects. For example, you could fill a tub with things in relation to nature such as leaves, rocks or sand. Another example could be filling it with items such as food. This could be items such as cooked pasta or beans. You could then go on to put in spoons and scoops to allow the child to play around with it.

Playing with food

Another idea is allowing a child to play with food on a tray. Allow the child to squish, smear, squeeze and taste the food. The one way a child loves to learn is by putting things in their mouth, so allow them to do so. Use foods that are suitable to them such as noodles, yogurt or beans. You could even consider using food colouring to intrigue them even more.

Let their curious hands have a play!

Sound Tubes

Begin by finding empty paper towel roles and securely covering the one end of the tube. Then set out lots of different objects or foods they can fill the tube with. You could consider using beads, pasta etc. Once this has been done, be sure to secure the other end of the tube. Finally, when this is done, allow them to play with it and shake it. The child will enjoy hearing the different sounds and this will stimulate them.

Sensory Sight Bottles

Begin by finding empty plastic bottles, of any size. Then allow the child to fill the bottles with water, food colouring, glitter etc. This then creates different patterns and textures.

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