



The first 1000 days

Sarah Holborn

ECEY4005/C

INTRODUCTION

The first 1000 days of a child's life from conception are vital. The brain experiences rapid growth more quickly at any other time and how a baby and mother are cared for and nourished during this time sets the foundation on the child's lifelong health and well-being and has a profound impact on the child's ability to thrive, learn and grow according to thousand days.org. From a baby having secure attachments from birth to looking at their holistic development and the importance on their development of playing and interacting in indoor and outdoor environments, they all play a vital part in the development of the child in the first 1000 days and will be looked at throughout this document.

building brains with nutrition



Nutrients such as zinc, iron, folic acid and iodine as well as fatty acids and protein, are essential for the building of a baby's brain which grows rapidly. The brain has approximately 10,000 cells at week 4 of pregnancy and has 10 billion cells at week 24! The baby could be at risk of developmental delays, cognitive deficits and birth defects if one or more of these are absent during pregnancy states thousand days.org, who goes on to suggest that through various studies, breastmilk is superfood for the brain! and is something that cannot be replicated in infant formula. Due to its variety of nutrients, proteins and as well as hormones, babies who have been breastfed tend to have higher IQ scores and perform well in intelligence test when older.

The nurturing interaction of breastfeeding involving the mother-to-child touch plays an essential part in strengthening a babies emotional circuitry and senses which are both important for socio emotional and cognitive development.

This journal article link backs up the role of nutrition in brain development and is described as the 'golden opportunity' of the [first 1000 days](#)



1 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs (source: cdpcollection.pressbooks.com)

A good representation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in action can be applied in the prenatal period as explored by Zuhike (no date).

Physiological needs - prenatal nutrition is an important part to ensure the fetus is growing accordingly. Having proper nutrients will result in a healthier baby being born to those that do not get them.

safety needs - prenatal safety is when a mother receives proper healthcare, including having checkups while pregnant which would help detect any potential issues with the fetus and having advice on diet, weight and exercise during pregnancy has the potential of lowering the likelihood of the baby having obesity issues in their lifetime.

belonging and love - parent stimulation helps the fetus have a better attachment with the parents as they communicate by talking to it whilst in the womb and playing music.

esteem - by parents using a happy and positive voice, the fetus will feel comfort and have a feeling of worth.

self actualization - a fetus can get a sense of who it is and how it feels through hearing familiar voices of a family member.

attachments



Bowlby(1989) described the importance of attachment as the 'vital importance of a stable and permanent' relationship throughout infancy and childhood with a loving mother primarily. Salehi (2017,p.146-148) states that though Bowlby's attachment theory was based on the mother-child bond and was first introduced for the post-partum period, it is believed that attachments between mother and child start during pregnancy and can be observed with the mothers enthusiastic interaction with the fetus. Attachment is considered an essential part of a child's development and recent studies have revealed that the inappropriate development of attachment has an effect on the child's right brain and can cause lower emotional and mental development, weak social interactions for them.

Whilst it is a natural innate reaction for babies to attach strongly to mothers, that is not always the case if a baby is separated at birth from the mother for some reason or for periods of time due to illness, [postnatal depression](#) can be another reason. These scenarios may cause disruption in the attachment according to Clare (2016) whom goes on to emphasize that challenges to Bowlby's theory argues that babies can form multiple attachments with keyworkers, for example in a day care setting.

As the majority of babies enter day care between 9 months to 1 years old, practitioners can only assume that the baby has high levels of emotional well-being and if they have low levels then their progress then their progress in cognitive development will be impacted.

Recognizing a securely attached baby includes:

- them crying when left alone with a stranger.

- when babies arms are lifted to be picked up when you enter back into a room.

Brodie (2018) explains that a toddler needs to be emotionally secure to take a risk on a small play frame for example, as the attachment between keyworker and child has to include trust as progress and development may be undermined by attachment issues.

It is important that for the parent and child to develop a relationship with the keyworker, any knowledge that the parents give about their child to the keyworker should be used to form close links between the home and setting. (Clare,2016) Communication is key according to NurseryResources.org. By a parent engaging in the their child's learning process, any concerns that they have regarding development for example, the keyworker can reassure or guide them through their experience and knowledge of child development, ensuring the best care of the child whilst being away from home. Gov. Wales(2021) document on A Curriculum for funded non maintained nursery settings states the importance of getting to know the child in the setting so transition will be easier. A discussion could take place between parent and keyworker according to Clare(2016). to help nurture the relationship between the child and keyworker, asking questions about the child's development and where they are at.

professional love/attachments

Clare Ann (2016) describes through her blog how research led by Dr Jools Page developed the idea of [professional love](#) In this video and through the PLEY project (professional love in the early years settings). The concept of care is talked about and how it is important to the professional and their role, as through the skills they have gained for that role they need to apply it as they care and educate the child in their settings (Page,2015) who goes on to say education and care is separable and talks about the importance of care and professional love. Clare Ann (2016) states that the term was developed to try to understand the intimacies that arise in the day care settings and how practitioners should deal with it as some have stated that whilst caring for a young child in the role, expressing their emotions and affections can be difficult.

Brodie (2018) states that through the research, an attachment tool kit was produced to guide practitioners to help a child's emotional development as through the expressing of caring and affectionate behaviours, a good emotional environment is achieved which is essential for young children as the foundations are being laid for their emotional health. Very young children are totally reliant on the conditions that surround the parents, carers and community around them so adults need to be good role models as realize that their responses to the child will have an affect on the personal, social and emotional development of the child in their care. Soft, friendly, happy and assuring tones could be applied to ease the child.

Brodie (2018) explains how [Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory](#) of a child is influenced by a number of social circles with the child being at the centre. His theory identifies what social interactions a child may have, for example, a toddler attending playgroup or a child being at a day care setting. As they come into contact with other children, a community influence will be experienced, social influences would have been expanded as they experience contact with adults and children outside of their immediate family, helping them build their self esteem, confidence and resilience through having the best care off practitioners in the settings.

Babies are born to react to a social stimulus.

- **newborn - first month** - through holding and touch
- **2 months** - through eye contact, first smiles, expressions and face to face interactions
- **4-5 months** - begins to reach and grab things, makes funny sounds
- **9 - 10 months** - babies start to use their communication skills
- **18 months** - starts to recognize themselves in mirrors, are more cooperative in social interactions

physical development

A baby's first physical contact will be with their mother for skin-to-skin contact and is shown to be evident of the bond between them states Koller Koloski *et al* (2017, p.95) and helps with the child's secure attachment with the mother. Babies communicate through physical activity with movements such as arm waving, giving smiles and the kicking of legs. For the mother to bond and attune more with her baby, baby massage is a great way to enjoy skin to skin contact and can also stimulate muscle development and tone and that many babies demonstrate better language and physical ability than those who have not suggests hands on babies (2022).



2 - tummy time (source: flickr.com, 2017)

Tummy time can start from birth but extra only if the baby is fully awake and observed closely, states Nct.org (2017). It has the benefits of strengthening a baby's back, neck and arm muscles and encourages them to develop their motor skills. It is also a great way to strengthen the muscles needed for the baby to roll, crawl and sit and also giving them a different view of their surroundings.

Holistic development

Holistic development means to develop the whole child emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually and intellectually states Empowered parents (2021). The holistic approach to education is a balance between the home, environment and the developing child.

communication

ways to support holistic development is:

- **physical -**



3 - source:onesmileymonkey.com (2012)

moulding play doh

Take time to experience fine motor skills, for example, holding a crayon to draw, moulding play doh (as the image shows above) or a child playing with blocks.

- **social skills** - by practising actions including sharing and taking it in turns.
- **emotional development-**

As holistic child development is where all areas of development, learning and growth is entwined, according to Brodie (2018), it helps children to connect with the world around them and covers all aspects of learning. In New Zealand their early childhood curriculum is Te Whariki which means 'woven mat' and covers the education of children from birth to five years and is based on socio cultural theories (Tki.org,2022) that recognize children's development are shaped by interactions, people and the environment around them. The principles focus on holistic development family and community, empowerment and relationships.

Vygotsky is the socio cultural theorist who put forward the notion that through social interaction with other children and adults, children will develop and learn.

Babies and young children develop and learn holistically during activities, For example, with a young child using a spoon for the first time, the physical need is met which then leads to independence and their self esteem is increased hence meeting an emotional need also. To develop better communication and social skills, the holistic approach gives opportunities for positive responses to learning, improving children's motivation according to Twinkl.co.uk(2022).

Enabling Environments (indoor)



Having a safe and stimulated space in the setting where the child can play, learn and explore greatly plays a key role in supporting the child's development and learning states [nurseryresources.org](https://www.nurseryresources.org/)(2018). Gov.Wales(2021) published a document relating to the new curriculum coming to wales in 2022 and states how having an enabling environment will help children appreciate the world around them through the exploring of their environment and that communication skills should be promoted and be communication rich. Also an enabling environment will help scaffold the child's development.

Christine Sarikas (2020) looks at theorist Vygotsky's scaffolding process he notioned, which is a teaching method that helps children excel more by them working with a more advanced child or an adult to achieve learning goals. For example, when infants are learning to walk, often they hold onto the hands or clothes of an older child or adult for help and continue to do so until they are able to walk on their own.

The adult role within the environment is key to how babies and young children interact independently and with others. The nurturing role they have is important and the way the practitioner speaks and interacts with the babies and children in their care should be of an enthusiastic, gentle and reassuring tone to help develop their communication and language skills. (Clare,2016)

how to create one



4 - treasure basket

(source: blogspot.com, 2011)



5 - an opportunity for a child to explore

(source: flickr.com, 2009)



6 - a relaxing cosy book corner.

(source:flickr.com,2009)

A warm, welcoming environment should be created to facilitate a sense of belonging. Clare (2016) agrees and suggests a stimulating and exciting environment which offers babies and young children the opportunity to investigate and explore. The best places for listening and conversation is in a book corner (as in image above). Making sure its comfortable and cosy and not next to the construction areas where children are encouraged to make noise. To nurture the child's development staff need to understand the importance of building supporting and warm relationships and make sure they provide familiar objects in the setting for them to explore, For example a kitchen. The environment also needs to have an area which allows children to focus and is quiet which will be especially helpful for children with special educational needs. By using treasure baskets in the setting, it offers an opportunity for babies who can sit up but not yet crawl to use their senses of taste, touch, smell, sound and visual stimulation whilst also supporting the holistic learning of the child as suggested by Carol Loyd (2019)

Theorist Piaget says a setting should offer the child motivation through stimulating environments. Sensorimotor stage is the first stage of cognitive development according to Piaget which lasts from birth to approximately 2 years old, using the senses of touch, sight and sound, by observing their surroundings states Pia Sanghvi (2020) who goes on to say how practitioners can individualise the child's learning experience based on the cognitive stages they are at through the interaction with their physical and social environments schemas are created and developed. Observation should play a key role in the setting of the practitioner as it helps see where children are at development, social and emotional wise but also identifies those learners who may need extra support. (Gov.Wales,2021)

Enabling Environments (outdoor)



The right environment outdoors provides the opportunities for babies and young children to explore and dig in sand to splash in puddles, even crawling outside can be facilitated. Even a young baby can be included under the watchful eye of the practitioner and be allowed to kick and roll on a rug laid out on the grass in summer to being wrapped up in winter and be carried in a sling or put in a pram suggests Nutbrown and Page (2008).

The new curriculum for Wales suggests that being outdoor supports the social, emotional and physical development of a child and is to be the main area where learning takes place, allowing learners to be in an open, relaxed and stimulating space to explore, practice and develop their motor function and balance. (Gov.Wales,2021)



7 - mud kitchen

(source:flickr,com,2016)

A mud kitchen is ideal as experiences are needed to be relevant to the environment the child is in, indoor role play would be a kitchen, outdoor role play with the mud kitchen could also include a picnic, or have books outside to read, factual ones that children can use to discover the natural world. (Clare,2012)

Gov.Wales (2008) is a guidance document to aid delivery of 'Education for sustainable development and global citizenship' in schools. As it is deep rooted from the foundation phase, the emphasis is on experimental learning activities outdoors as well as indoors, and develop the knowledge of the environments and engage the children in culturally diverse experiences.

conclusion

To conclude, after looking at the first 1000 days from conception to 2 years old in depth, the importance of outdoor play and child led learning comes across strongly. The attachments that are created from birth with the mother and to the setting with the practitioner, it will set the child up for life as they learn through holistic play and stimulating environments and with the professional love that is shown in day care settings.

reference list

Attachment image (2005) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gettinger/55821204/in/photolist-> (Accessed: 6 January 2022).

Baby brain image (2019) Available at: <https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2019/marijuana-exposure-affects-developing-babies-brains/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Book corner image (2010) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/26880148@N03/4959964810> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Bowlby, J. (1989) *The making and breaking of affectional bonds*. Routledge: Oxon.

Brodie, k. (2018) *The holistic care and development of children from birth to three*. Routledge: Oxon.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological image (no date) Available at: <https://www.pinterest.com/192317846561498583/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Clare, A. (2016) *Communication and interaction in the early years*. Sage Publications: London.

Clare, A. (2012) *Creating a learning environment for babies and toddlers*. Sage Publications.

Clare, A. (2016) *Professional love in the early years settings*, [blog]. 6 July. Available at: <https://www.pacey.org.uk/news-and-views/pacey-blog/2016/july-2016/'professional-love'-in-early-years-settings/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Cusick S, E. Georgieff M, K. (2016) 'The role of nutrition in brain development' *The golden opportunity of the "first 1000 days"* 175, 16 - 21. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4981537/?report=reader> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Gov. Wales (2021) *A curriculum for funded non maintained nursery settings*. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/curriculum-funded-non-maintained-settings-consultation-doc.pdf>. (Accessed: 8 January 2022).

Gov. Wales (2008) *Education for sustainable development and global citizenship 'A common understanding for schools'*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/eaf467e6-30fe-45c9-93ef-cb30f31f1c90/common-understanding-for-school.pdf> (Accessed: 13 January 2022).

Gov. Wales (2021) *Enabling pathways*. Available at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/enabling-pathways-consultation-document_O.pdf (Accessed: 7 January 2022).

Hands on babies (2022) *The benefits of baby massage*. Available at: <https://handsonbabies.co.uk/benefits/> (Accessed: 5 January 2022).

House play image (2009) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/christaface/3331527413/> (Accessed: 7 January 2022).

Koller Kologeski, T. Strapasson, M. Schneider, V. and Renostro, J. (2017) 'skin to skin contact of the newborn with its mother in the perspective of the multiprofessional team.' *Journal of nursing UFPE*, 11, (1) 94-101.

Loyd, C. (2019) *heuristic play - treasure baskets*, [blog]. 14 August. Available at: <https://sensorytreasures.co.uk/heuristic-play-treasure-baskets/> (Accessed: 12 January 2022).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs image (no date) Available at: <https://cdpcollection.pressbooks.com/chapter/disruptive-pedagogy-and-the-practice-of-freedom/> (Accessed: 8 January 2022).

Mud kitchen image (2016) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/phrenologist/26318210214> (Accessed: 12 January 2022).

Nct.org.uk(2017) *Top tips for tummy time*. Available at: <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/your-childs-development/0-3months/top-tips-for-tummy-time> (Accessed: 7 January 2022).

Nursery Resources.org (2018) *Creating an enabling environment*. Available at: <https://www.nurseryresources.org/articles/enabling-environment/creating-an-enabling-environment/> (Accessed: 6 January 2022).

Nursery Resources.org (2019) *The importance of communication with parents in EYFS*. Available at: <https://www.nurseryresources.org/articles/parents-as-partners/communication-with-parents/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Nutbrown, C. Page, J. (2008) *Working with babies and children from birth to three*. Sage Publications: London.

Page, J. (2015) *Concept of care in early childhood education* [video]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezhv2cUhVCw> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Play area image (no date) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/43540461@N08/20824659234> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Playdoh toddler play image (2012) Available at: <https://www.wonesmileymonkey.com/reviews/learning-numbers-and-shapes-with-play-doh-toddler-play/> (Accessed: 6 January 2022).

Post natal poster (no date) Available at: https://thumbnails-visually.netdna-ssl.com/what-is-postpartum-depression_5b72b6055a41a_w1500.png (Accessed: 9 January 2022).

Salehi, K. Kohan, S. (2017) 'maternal -fetal attachment: what we know, ' *pregnancy and child birth*, 2, (5), pp 146-148. DOI10.15426/ipcb.2017.02.00038

Sanghvi, P. (2020) 'Piagets theory of cognitive development: a review,' *Indian journal of mental health*. 7, (2). Available at: <https://indianmentalhealth.com/pdf/2020/vol7-issue2/5-Review-Article-Piagets-Theory.pdf> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Sarikas, C. (2020) 'Vygotsky scaffolding: what is it and how to use it,' [blog]. 4 Jan. Available at: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/vygotsky-scaffolding-zone-of-proximal-development> (Accessed: 8 January 2022).

Show and tell image (no date) Available at: <https://preschools.sa.gov.au/cambrai-preschool/our-centre/show-and-tell> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Thousand days.org (2021) *why 1000 days*, Available at: <https://thousanddays.org/why-1000-days/> (Accessed: 8 January 2022).

Tki.org (2022) *curriculum principles*. Available at: <https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/design-your-curriculum/principles-in-action/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Toddlers play area image (2008) Available at: <https://www.geograph.ie/photo/512145> (Accessed: 13 January 2022).

Treasure baskets image (2011) Available at: <https://ozmummy.blogspot.com/2011/03/exploring-treasure-basket.html> (Accessed: 12 January 2022).

Tummy time image (2011) Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/walakazoo/6372607411/> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Twinkl.co.uk (2022) *holistic development*. Available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/holistic-development-eyfs> (Accessed: 10 January 2022).

Zuhike, K. (no date) *Maslows hierarchy of needs, prenatal period*. Available at: <https://hierarchybymaslow.weebly.com/prenatal-period.html> (Accessed: 12 January 2022).