



The First 1000 Days- Scrapbook

What are the first 1000 days and why are they important?



This scrapbook is based upon the first 1000 days of an infant's life and the importance surrounding this timeframe. The first 1000 days begins at conception and ends when the child reaches their second birthday. It is suggested that these days are potentially the most vulnerable yet most important days of an individual's life. How well individuals are cared for and what they are provided with are the foundations that can shape their outcomes in life, which is why these 1000 days are so

important. Within these 1000 days the development of an individual is extremely fast and parents, carers and all professionals involved must take a holistic approach to the child's care in order to ensure that it is positive and that their environment is suitable in order to provide them the best grounds to thrive in their development and lead the healthiest and happiest possible life.

give your baby a great start

vitamins



A daily multivitamin is the best source of folic acid, which may prevent neural tube defects (NTDs).



diet

Eat more foods that are naturally high in folic acid like green leafy vegetables, lentils, black beans, and enriched grain products (bread, pasta and fortified cereals).



As much as 70% of NTDs could be prevented if all pregnant women took 400mg of folic acid daily in the early months of pregnancy.



weight



Underweight women have a higher risk of having a low birth-weight baby.



Overweight women have an increased risk of miscarriage, complications of labor and delivery, as well as birth defects.



Avoid drinking too much caffeine, as it can pass through the placenta to your baby. Keep your intake to 200mg of caffeine, or one 12-ounce cup of coffee, per day.

Steer clear of raw or undercooked meat, fish high in mercury, and unpasteurized juice and dairy products.



prescription or OTC medication

Always check with your doctor before taking any new prescription or over-the-counter medications including herbal products and statins.



Women taking opioid-based painkillers in early pregnancy doubled their risk of having a baby with a serious heart defect.



smoking, drugs & alcohol

Smoking during pregnancy causes 20% of oral clefts.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is 100% preventable by abstaining from alcohol.

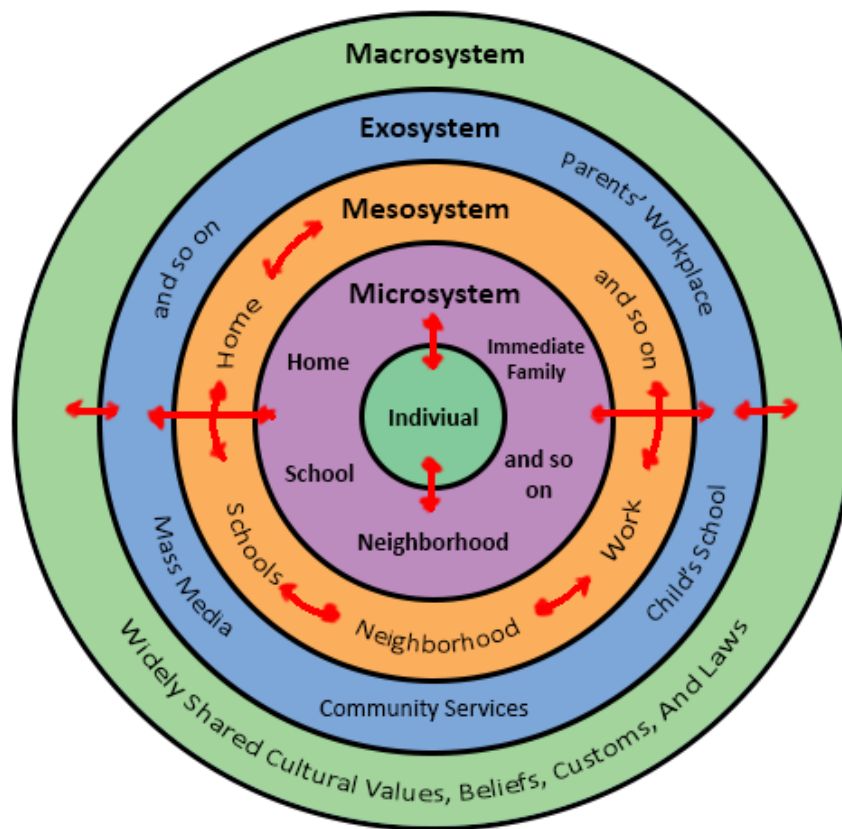


Legal and illegal drug use during pregnancy can lead to serious birth defects and babies can suffer withdrawal after birth (neonatal abstinence syndrome).

Exceptional Care in the first 1000 days

Within this timeframe it is key that the child receives exceptional care which is care that ensures a child is living in a safe and healthy home environment and that they are free from any form of harm, it is carried out by professionals within the caring for young people field, some of the professionals involved might be health visitors, social workers, GP's, play workers and therapists such as play or speech and language. The main place that exceptional care is given would be at all childcare facilities, whether it be a childminder, nursery or preschool. It is provided by the professionals in the setting but can be displayed in many ways. Exceptional care is made up from effectively trained professionals, carefully planned room set up to ensure it is enabling and engaging and that it meets the needs of a child, and it will also involve education to care givers on good nutrition, both at the setting and at home, exceptional care provides good opportunities for the child to flourish and development into different stages of their life.

This care is essential prior to the child being born, as the 1000 days begins at conception, this is when exceptional care should start too! Exceptional care needs to be provided in all mothers antenatal care, whether it be their first midwife appointment, their growth scans, or their prenatal classes where they learn how to best prepare for their birth and to ensure baby is healthy throughout the pregnancy. Exceptional care will also need to be delivered by the GP and anyone involved in the birth of the child and the few weeks after. It is vital for the mother to be fit, well and mentally healthy at all stages as otherwise this could rub off onto the mental health of a child, and could result in stunted brain development, close check-ups throughout pregnancy will ensure the mother is not taking in any alcohol, drugs or smoking, as these could result in an unhealthy child when they are born too. Ensuring the education is delivered to the parent in a positive format and showing support helps to provide a good base for the mother to have a healthy, successful pregnancy, and this being provided is, exceptional care. The education could be provided in a leaflet format (like the picture alongside) or through video or perhaps just through discussion with a professional or a class in a prenatal group. March of Dimes Foundation. (2015). Department of Health. (2016).



What do theorists say about development in the first 1000 days?

According to Bronfenbrenner who was cited in a book by Karl Aubrey and Alison Riley, a child should always be studied in a familiar environment surrounded by adults the child knows in order to find out the most about a child. This suggests that when a professional is setting up an environment in perhaps a nursery setting, they should always go and meet the child in their home environment to gauge the child's nature and personality, allowing the professional to set up a positive, engaging and stimulating environment in their setting, this in turn will promote positive development within different aspects of the child's life. Bronfenbrenner also suggested that a child would not develop if they were living in isolation, so within the first 1000 days of a child's life it is important for them to be surrounded by lots of different people and put into social situations such as play groups and nursery as without socialising and being left alone a lot the child might not develop to their best potential. Bronfenbrenner focused a lot upon the child's family within his family, and in the first 1000 days a child is solely reliant on those they live with as they are unable to do anything independently, they rely on being kept safe and healthy by their parents and possibly siblings, proving socialising being key in the first 1000 days. His theory was the ecosystem where he had 5 different key systems to development, his first system the 'microsystem' is the one mostly used within the first 1000 days as it focuses on the social interactions at home and in the education setting, which in the first 1000 days is often all a child will see, their family and professionals at a setting, the interactions they have during this time are said to be where the child forms relationships, discovers social norms and begin to learn behaviours. Aubrey, K et al (2019). This brings up the question of whether a child during the first 1000 days has a moral compass, the video attached suggests that a child is able to recognise positive, good behaviour compared to negative, bad

behaviour, which shows why within the first 1000 days it is very important to provide a baby with positive interactions, behaviours, and the stability to form good social relationships, as they are learning what is right from wrong, this video suggests they are very aware of the difference between right and wrong. See video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBW5vdhr_PA

Piaget has a theory about cognitive development and how children make sense of the world, stating that everyone is born with an 'innate schema' which helps them interact with the environment and people within it, suggesting that an individual within the first 1000 days is able to develop independently, however this theory also says that a child is able to develop 'new schemas' as long as they are provided with more experiences, which means within the first 1000 days a parent or professional needs to enable a child to be a part of different experiences and visit different environments, without developing these new schemas a child is unable to reach a state of 'equilibrium', which means a child would not be able to understand the world around them and will struggle in society. This theory suggests that without being exposed to new things a child will have a closed, undeveloped mind, for example if a child is made aware of what a dog is, but they are not exposed to any other animal. The schema will not be created, and if they are exposed in the future to an animal that is similar the child will simply assume it is a dog. This extenuates the importance of providing new experiences within the first 1000 days. Aubrey, K et al (2019). This is then continued as children leave the first 1000 days and go into education, the new curriculum in Wales is focused upon providing lots of new and different experiences for children in order for them to learn. More information surrounding the new curriculum, however, can be found here; <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

Nutrition in the First 1000 Days





1 - The website 'First 1000 Days' provides lots of additional information surrounding the nutrition within these days and how it relates to the overall health and wellbeing of a child, and how this can affect their brain.

Nutrition in the first 1000 days could be deemed the most crucial aspects of an individual's development, as it needs to be healthy and vitamin rich in order for them to physically develop in their muscles and bones but also for their brain to become stronger and more efficient. Good nutrition needs to start at the very start of the 1000 days, from conception, the mother will be recommended to take folic acid, which is a form of vitamin b9, and its aim is to prevent any birth defects and it is essential for the production, repair, and functioning of DNA is crucial to the rapid cell growth of the placenta. (Mills, K. (2021).) Professionals at the prenatal appointments also need to provide the mother with information focused on how dangerous smoking and drinking might be and the effects this could have on the child when they are born. When the baby is born and until they turn 6 months their diet will be mostly milk as this is filled with all the necessary nutrients a baby of this age would need to best develop, whether it be done through breastfeeding or formula feeding.

Then when the baby turns approximately 6 months old and for the rest of their 1000 days it is important that parents are educated by the health visitor to introduce solids into their diet and allow them opportunities to try new foods and also understand the importance of mealtimes. These meals should always be filled with an equal balance of the food groups and if a child begins to try healthier foods at a younger age, they are more likely to carry that through to adulthood. The 1000 days. (No Date). Babies could begin a process called baby-led weaning, where the parent or professional makes lots of different foods available to the child and the child using their fingers tries different things at different times from a plate themselves, teaching them about independence and introducing manners at the table from a young age, rather than spoon feeding which could appear to keep independence away.

Within a childcare setting within the first 1000 days some professionals run 'sensology sessions' where the children get the opportunity to use their sense to discover and taste new foods, this is a fun way to push positive and good nutrition onto these individuals, so that they are able to go home and eat these foods at mealtimes because they have tried and liked them. Longhorn, F. (2013).



Providing a stimulating, enabling environment for children during the first 1000 days





2 - Within the first 1000 days it is very important that the environment surrounding individuals at home or a childcare setting, is engaging, stimulating, safe and calm. Professionals must ensure that their childcare environment is enabling, this means that it is emotionally safe, (allows children to discover emotional regulation in themselves) easily accessible both in and outdoors and that toys and activities are available and promote healthy development. Children must be able to freely explore their environment, babies will often put everything in their mouths which means that staff must enable these environments by ensuring they are physically safe. One way to make this possible is to create edible resources so if they are put in mouths, they are totally harm free. An example of these resources would be edible paint, made out of natural yoghurt and food colouring, or salt dough (edible playdough).



3 - Another way to make the environment suitable and enabling is by running themed weeks at a day-care setting, for example when St David's day is approaching, running a Welsh themed week, where the rooms are dressed up as Welsh cities and landmarks or have welsh traditions behind them such as coal mines or a role play Welsh food stall. Professionals could also bring in traditional welsh food, expanding children's taste palette, and ask children to dress up in welsh themes costumes or dragons. This allows children to explore different environments and also find out about different cultures from a young age, and it is a type of celebration which adds a sense of fun and excitement to the environment. This could be changed for appropriate national holidays when relevant. This helps to promote multiculturalism and diversity. These weeks also will help to support rich communication from a young age and build positive, good vocabulary as children begin to start talking. Also, in the environment it is helpful to have open access to lots of different types of books, also a selection of book

that celebrate difference such as the ones in the picture alongside. These can be read to children at different points in the first 1000 days and beyond, and it helps teach children to accept and respect anyone's background, views and feelings as they grow up.



4 - An enabling environment must provide a good scaffolding for developing mathematic and literacy concepts, for examples numbers and letters on walls, physical opportunities to explore numbers and letters within sand or shaving foam, both indoors and outdoors, as should it provide changes to improve and strengthen both fine and gross motor skills, things like tweezers and buttons, opportunities to use scooters, slides, climbing frames, as this helps to also provide risk and challenge safely, helping children discover resilience and confidence.



Building Relationships and Enabling Adults





5 - Building relationships within the first 1000 days is vital, whether that be with their parent or carer, a professional or even their social worker, without building a positive relationship the child might feel unsafe, struggle with attachment issues or possibly not have any trust in adults, at both a young age and as they grow. A child might not build a relationship with their parent if they are not interacted with, or they are ignored, within the first 1000 days children are very aware of emotions and are able to read their parents feelings. The video alongside is a fantastic example of what happens when family interact with a child verses when they ignore the child. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0>



6 - When dealing with children in the first 1000 days adults must provide consistency, show compassion and kindness both to the children and other staff as a model. When changing nappies, it is important that the changing room is appropriate to

a baby and toddlers needs, for example having animals on the walls and bright colours, but as staff it is helpful to sing to the child, or tell them a story, so that the child feels at ease during this tricky time.



7 - Enabling adults also need to show children how to best recognise and accept other children's opinions and behaviours, and that it is ok to be who you are, one way that adults can do this is by showing children tv programmes, or reading stories such as 'Sesame Street', the characters in this show come from all different backgrounds and have different needs, so this helps to support diversity, and is a conversation starter for children and the professionals around them, it also allows for calm 'cwtchy' time with staff. This in turn will them promote using your voice and making decisions from a young age. In order to form a close bond with children it is important that they show valuable connections to child's home and wider community. It is also helpful if adults model appropriate language, this can be done through songs such as 'we are all amazing' (found at- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbHQ-OS9_G0) and that they are responsive and interpret children's communication whether it be via babies cry, toddler babble or picture exchange cards and they should listen and meet their needs, whether it be through words or actions. Welsh Government. (2021). Enabling Pathways: Consultation.

Enabling Experiences in the first 1000 days



8 - Within the first 1000 days it is important that enabling experiences are provided by professionals, this could be to the mother when she is pregnant, through an antenatal class, or perhaps pregnancy yoga classes, but continued when the child is born.



9 - An enabling experience is simply something that is more hands on and meaningful, giving children independence and a sense of risk, but also allowing them to learn consequence. These types of experiences could be climbing a tree or walking along a wall at some height, a child will use their own skills and judgement to do this and should be allowed opportunities to try these things and not stopped because it is 'dangerous' as risk taking is a type of learning that the child will only gain if

given the chance, they also will discover the consequence if they take this too far and therefore fall over, but should also learn what they are capable of at a given time.

*A controlled enabling experience could be a sensory circuit, An example of a sensory circuit is attached alongside.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTAB-a_Nt6U.*

These circuits help to regulate young children's body and use their proprioceptive sense and their vestibular sense, which are not in use when children are not active. These circuits calm the brain and provide an understanding of space, core strength and balance, these can be done in childcare settings in groups or individually, often used with children with additional needs. Leeds County Council. (No Date).



10 - Babies need to be given the time to be alone and solely reliant on themselves to do things naturally, whether that be lying on the grass next to another child in their baby class or sat at home in the garden sensing different things outside, such as grass, bark and soil. An enabling adult should help to create and build an enabling environment (as stated above) in order to give babies and toddlers enabling experiences. In the first 1000 days it however also key to stimulate a child from their birth, according to UNICEF 'Children who are read to, talked to, sung to, played with, are happier and have better cognitive capacity – and a better chance to live a fuller, more productive life'. Lake, A. (2017).



*11 - Enabling experiences needs to promote independence, offer risk and challenge and also be real life scenarios. This could be done by using role play, storytelling or puppet shows. An example of this in practice would be reading story books surrounding current world issues such as the coronavirus children's book found at this link;
<https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/children/documents/coronavirus-axel-scheffler.pdf>, provides an opportunity to use this story to provide some understanding to children in an enabling way especially to children aged 1-2. Welsh Government. (2021).
Enabling Pathways: Consultation.*

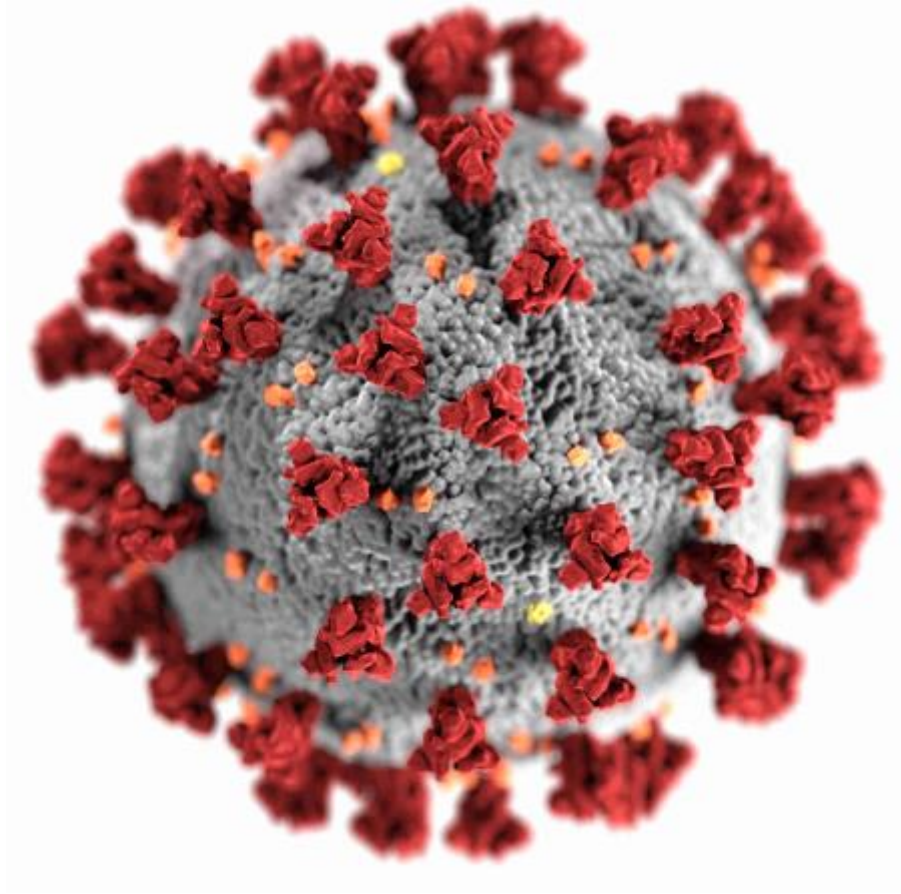


Facing Challenges



12 - There are many different challenges that professionals face when dealing with families in the first 1000 days, one challenge would be parental stigma, for example when a parent feels ashamed to ask for any help they might require,

whether it be parenting classes or access to food banks, therefore they struggle in silence and possibly cause the child to suffer as a result, for example not having enough money for nutritious food so bulk buying less healthy foods such as bread or cereals because they don't want to reach out to the professionals to ask for help in case of judgement or the possibility of involving social services. Poverty can cause many issues in the first 1000 days as a child might be left malnourished which can weaken the brain and body during this vital stage which could lead to early mortality and, loss of neurodevelopmental potential. Cusick, S. (2013).



13 - Another challenge that professionals are currently facing is the coronavirus pandemic, this has changed and put a stop to many different aspects of the first 1000 days sector. For example, where a professional would've been able to observe a child from home before the pandemic there is currently a stop upon home visits, so you cannot see the child in their calm environment. There has also been a stop to health visitor appointments within the home so any issues in a child early home life might've slipped the net as throughout lockdown these visits became phone calls or appointments on site at the hospital rather than at home, meaning there are children going undiagnosed for neurological conditions such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder or not provided a social worker due to parents masking problems. Children are also less socially aware and screen time is higher as children haven't met as many people or seen as many social interactions as they would've in previous years, which has had an effect on their social development. Children were spending less time outside, in parks, playgrounds and in play areas, their physical development and their proprioceptive and vestibular aren't being used. Dackevych, A. (2020).



14 - There have also been many staff shortages causing challenges in this sector because of positive cases, lockdowns, and isolations, this has resulted in missed appointments, whether it be in the maternity sector or the childcare setting, which might've resulted in parents receiving misinformation, or not equipping the child with the most appropriate resources for their development in this time, due to miscommunication between professionals and families. Staffing has also caused challenges as childcare settings are often underfunded and there are small amounts of staff to large groups of children, meaning some children might not get the attention they deserve or build the secure, close relationships they would've in a smaller, more intimate group.



It can be seen that there is lots going on in the first 1000 days and there are many influences upon a baby's first 1000 days. Bronfenbrenner would say that their social surroundings have the biggest impact upon their long-term development, whereas Piaget would say the experiences they are provided with and the interactions they see around them have the most influence on these days and what happens beyond them. Overall, it can be seen that through enabling adults, experiences, and the environment around a child throughout these days stimulation of the child and their brain is the underlying key to development, and this can be done in so many different ways. This scrapbook also

gives an insight into how without the appropriate nutrition a child will struggle to physically grow or develop, and if all aspects of the needs are met, then these are the best foundations for the first 1000 days



Reference List

Aubrey, K et al (2019). Understanding and Using Educational Theories. 2nd ed. London: SAGE Publications. 150-154. THEORIST SECTION

Cusick, S. (2013). The First 1000 Days of Life. Available: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/958-the-first-1000-days-of-life-the-brains-window-of-opportunity.html>. Last accessed 12th Jan 2022.

Dackevych, A. (2020). Coronavirus Lockdown: How has it affected babies? Available: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-52507731>. Last accessed 13th Jan 2022.

Department of Health. (2016). Safer Maternity Care. Available: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560491/Safer_Maternity_Care_action_plan.pdf. Last accessed 9th January 2022.

Lake, A. (2017). The first 1,000 days: a singular window of opportunity. Available: <https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/first-1000-days-singular-opportunity>. Last accessed 12th Jan 2022.

Leeds County Council. (No Date). *Sensory Circuits at Home*. Available: <http://www.starsteam.org.uk/media/Example>. Last accessed 15th Jan 2022.

Longhorn, F. (2013). Sensology. Available: <https://www.thebridgeschool.co.uk/sensology-1/>. Last accessed 12th Jan 2022.

March of Dimes Foundation. (2015). Prescription painkillers, widely used by childbearing age women, double birth defects risk. Available: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-01-prescription-painkillers-widely-childbearing-age.html>. Last accessed 9th January 2022.

Mills, K. (2021). Folic Acid for pregnancy. Available: <https://www.babycenter.com/pregnancy/diet-and-fitness/folic-acid-why-you-need-it-before-and-during-pregnancy> Last accessed 12th Jan 2022.

Unknown. (2016). Nutrition in the first 1000 days. Available: <https://thousanddays.org/why-1000-days>. Last accessed 10th January 2022.

Welsh Government. (2021). Enabling Pathways: Consultation. Available: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/enabling-pathways-consultation-document_0.pdf. Last accessed 13th Jan 2022.