



The First 1000 days

What is the first 1000 days?

The first 1000 days are from the point of conception all the way to the child's 2nd birthday, this time is the most essential time of a child's life, this is the time of most significant growth mentally and physically. The first 1000 of a baby's life is essential, it can have a lifelong effect on the child whatever happens during this time.

Why is it important?

Children are impacted by a variety of factors, including biology, experiences, environment, diet, and the health and manner of life of their parents during pregnancy, as demonstrated by The First Thousand Days.

The most remarkable aspect is that the foetus actively responds to environmental changes from the moment of conception onward, using cues from the mother's physical and mental condition to "predict" the kind of environment they will be placed into and changing their physical structures accordingly.

A child's first 1000 days, from conception to age 2, are extremely important. The roots of a child's health and development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural development) are laid during this period of increased vulnerability, and a trajectory is established.

For example, it is much more likely that a Newborn will fall further behind in following years than to catch up with individuals who have had a better start when their growth falls behind the norm in the first year of life.



Current Challenges

The current challenges that early years practitioners have to overcome when caring for young babies and children is varied. Many Practitioners find that they do not have enough time in the day to do everything. There is also a lot of paperwork to complete within this job, some practitioners also complain that there is not enough time spent with the children. There is also a difficulty recruiting staff who are qualified, which is a big problem. Some find difficulties in communicating with parents, there is also noted that many schools and nurseries notice big levels of staff absences. "Nursery staff, including management teams, were moved around to cover rooms in nurseries to ensure ratio requirements were met." this shows the struggles of staffing currently. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on this.



1 - The new curriculum

This curriculum highlights the children and infants individuality in the educational setting and the fact that between birth and age five, a child's growth happens considerably fast. By maintaining the focus on holistic development, the teaching practise places the needs of the students as they develop. When a youngster initially enters an environment to start their educational adventure, it

may be their first time being away from their home surroundings. Others will already be used to the sights, sounds, and daily routines of a nursery. It is our duty to recognise the experiences that every child brings to their early education experience and to collaborate with parents and carers to support children as they begin this novel and exciting phase of development.

The fundamentals for holistic and meaningful learning for all children begin with competent, perceptive, and engaged people who offer genuine and engaging experiences in efficient, stimulating settings. Planning experiences and places that are meaningful and pertinent to children's interests is part of our responsibility as adults. Through five developmental pathways, this curriculum guarantees that the necessary Curriculum for Wales components are included into an appropriate pedagogical framework that focuses on the needs of the developing child.

- **Loose part play**

Having a range of loose parts, or things that may be moved around, carried, stacked, lined up, and manoeuvred in many different ways to encourage creativity when playing, is key to loose parts play. More and more environments are embracing the idea that kids may construct their environment on their own through loose parts play and that it can be changed at any time, which was first put forth by architect Simon Nicholson in the 1970s.

- **messy sensory play**

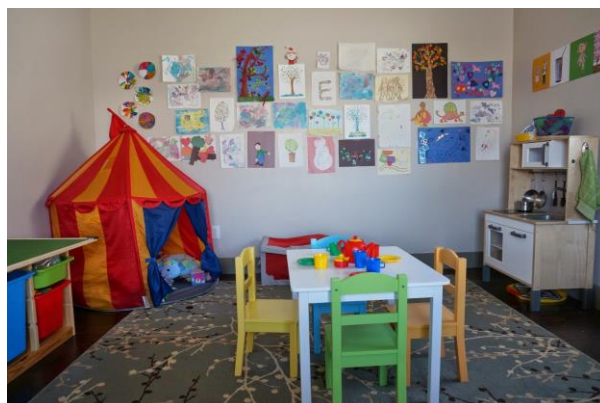
Play is a vital part of how babies and young children learn and grow, but unstructured, exploratory play is especially important. Although playing a game or using toys can be informative and entertaining, messy play is more focused on experimenting and exploring with various materials without having to build or create anything. Young children can use their senses, curiosity, and knowledge to discover things on their own in this way.

- **water play**

Water play provides exploration and experimentation for children, its also proven that it improves their motor skills exponentially. For the children its and immersive, calming, and sensory experience. Its also a fantastic way for children to play outside instead of inside.

- **Reading and singing**

When we are younger, we use our voices and other instruments to show our emotions to adults and other children to bond and have fun, but they also have important educational purposes: they help us learn rhyme, pattern, puls, and structure without the complexity of language; they help us understand how people connect and express emotion; they make us happy and promote storytelling and imagination.



2 - Environments

Childcare practitioners must take into consideration that not just physical environments like indoors and outdoors are important but also the emotional environment on top of that. Making sure that caregivers know the importance of parent-practitioner relationships and partnerships and how the security and at home the children feel in the childcare setting, this is considerably important for both the caregiver and the families, if the child feels secure and safe in the educational environment then the child has the confidence to branch off and explore their new environment happily.

Children's learning and development are supported considerably by an enabling environment. It is well known as mentioned above that children and babies learn and grow the most in nurturing, encouraging environments that cater to their unique and partial needs while at the same time letting them play and explore freely on their own accord.



3 - Loose Play

What is loose play?

Children of all ages and developmental stages benefit from loose parts play because it offers a stimulating environment consisting of interesting things that foster curiosity, creativity, imagination, and creation.

Children can give the toys they are playing with their own purposes and meanings when there is no set way to play, allowing them to explore, create, and invent.

What are the benefits of loose play?

Playing with unstructured objects can enhance kids' learning by:

- an increase in exercise improving mental abilities
- Increasing concentration and interest
- enhancing innate curiosity
- increasing critical thinking and problem-solving skills by encouraging dialogue and teamwork.

This way of educational and independent play is intertwined with the theorist Montessori, In a not so traditional way, the Montessori style of education gives children the confidence to build their own educational freedom and self-confidence while learning at the same time.. Its unique features include mixed-age classrooms, three-hour activity time slots, and unique learning curricula and learning tools.

The Montessori approach helped many extraordinary people learn and develop to their potential. These people have gone on to receive great success in many different fields, including politics, the tech sector, and the arts sector.

Similarly to Montessori, Froebel also gave a lot of importance to child-led play and thought that adults should work with kids to give them the opportunity to create, learn, and explore on their own accord while at the same time giving them gentle supervision. Early education is still highlighted on watching growth via play, rather than focusing on planned teaching sessions that are more structured but give the children less freedom.



4 - Being Inclusive

The best way to make sure that every child or infant has equally the same opportunity to attend school, study, and develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed is through inclusive education. All children in the same classrooms, in the same schools, is what is meant by inclusive education. It gives educational possibilities for unique populations, including some minority language speakers as well as children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Learning systems that are inclusive recognise the contributions that students from different backgrounds make in the classroom and let different groups to coexist and develop together for the benefit of all the children, their differences make them stronger in many different ways.

Instead of concentrating only on special needs, a more inclusive learning strategy places greater emphasis on learning needs. Every learner is unique. Individuals with these needs can receive specific support, and actions tailored to their needs can simultaneously benefit all learners.



5 - Professional Partnerships/ Relationships

To make sure that children's needs are recognised, thoroughly examined, and met throughout their development stages, partnership working is vital for both the child and the families. Developing these strong business relationships helps people work together as a team and gives them a more full

understanding of the children and families. This then may encourage children to have high expectations for themselves and achieve better results in the long run.

This is linked into Bronfenbrenner's theory, The ecological systems theory was founded by Urie Bronfenbrenner to explain infant development. His methods explain that a child's environment and inner environment both have an equal impact on their development and growth for the better or worse. According to the Bronfenbrenner child development theory, the infant or child's growth and development are influenced by four different systems:

- Microsystems
- Mesosystems
- Exosystems
- Macrosystems



6 - Respectful care and meaningful learning

the variety of Different ways humans process, learn, and remember knowledge are expressed as learning styles. All early infants and children acquire knowledge through engaging themselves on hands-on play activities, such as doing, touching, imagining, and moving. Children also learn by seeing and hearing things. As you watch your child, you'll notice strengths and preferences that can help you understand what kind of learning style they prefer and what style suits them better.

While you should encourage the child's strengths, keep in mind that giving them with challenges will also help them develop. Many things a youngster can do well. Offer the child different opportunities to help him or her discover new strengths and passions that will deepen their awareness of the world and environment around.

Children are greatly influenced by their parents and guardians, teachers, and other carers. Learning about a child's learning process can help us teach them better and accordingly. Early childhood programmes are frequently set up to support different ways of children's needs and skills.

This includes:

enough time for movement

Time for a group circle and music

The inclusion of learning centres with a different set of experiences in the classroom (such as a reading books, a block area, a motor area, outdoor play area, and an art area) encourages participation from kids with a wide range of learning preferences while also exposing them to activities they might not normally seek out, giving them a chance to try new things and to develop further.



7 - International approaches: Forest school

Forest School gives the children an opportunity for growth and development through a child-centered, learning process. It is a reliable programme that encourages playing, discovering new things, and risk-taking with support from carers. By giving children these hands-on, learner experiences in a naturally learning environment, it encourages them to gain confidence and self-esteem naturally and through their own decision making in a completely natural environment.

Thousands of teachers who practise Forest School embrace its developmental ways and are always working to improve their learning processes and abilities in order to help their students. It has been practiced in the Scandinavian open-air lifestyle known as *friluftsliv*, which translates to free air life in English, which is where Forest School originally began and became successful. It first appeared in the UK in 1993.

The Reggio Emilia way of early childhood education puts the child in full control and sees them as curious beings with the capability to grow and learn from their surroundings and the interactions they form with others. The centre of the concept is the idea that the child has full rights to their own education. Children are seen as strong, clever people who should be given every opportunity to get their potential rather than as having wants that must be met. Children are said to have boundless potential and a desire to engage with and improve the world and also wants to learn from it.

As a result, learning is motivated by the youngster, who fully participates in creating their own knowledge and is given authority over the learning process.



8 - The Te whariki Approach

The Te Whariki approach, which was first shown in 1996, is known quite well on a global scale as a cutting-edge curriculum that values interactions with people, places, and things as well as social and cultural learning.

Te Whariki is a Maori name that means woven mat. It ties together the fundamental ideas, themes, and objectives to show how various curriculum elements are interconnected. The people, places, and things in the child's environment, such as the adults, the other kids, the physical environment, and the resources, actually offer the curriculum itself. Te Whariki doesn't offer any recommendations for subject matter or instructional strategies. These are made locally and represent the various families, communities, cultures, and tribes.

Comparing all of these approaches, they are all fairly similar in the way that they all mostly let the child discover and decide what they want to learn and how they learn. With the forest school, they are being taught in a completely natural environment that encourages useful skills that they can discover in a forest environment. Furthermore, the Reggio approach places the child in control of their own learning and knowledge which is similar to the forest school in the ways that they can risk take. The Te whariki approach is a more cultural approach, which uses people places and things as the curriculum itself, which gives the child an array of options to choose from, which is very alike to the forest school, they both use natural resources to educate and give the child knowledge and freedom on the natural and human world. All of these approaches are extremely similar their ways.

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