

The First 1000 Days Exceptional Care

Claire Thomas 2208856

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Introduction



The first 1,000 days of life – This is the time which is roughly spanning between the conception of the baby up to their second birthday – this is a unique period of time when the child's foundations of their optimum growth, health and even their neurodevelopment which goes across their whole lifespan get established. Although sadly in the different developing countries across the world including the UK, poverty and malnutrition can weaken this foundation, which in turn leads to early mortality and can even attribute to significant morbidities which can be poor health, and even worse a substantial loss of their neurodevelopmental potential. We have come from a long history of "undernutrition" and "malnutrition" due to a serious lack of the adequate amounts of nutrition which is needed. While undernutrition remains a major challenge all over the World in the day and age, us humans now face some negative effects of what is called "overnutrition" this comes in the form of obesity and unbalanced diets. Although they are different these conditions can also be considered as "malnutrition" both of these conditions have been shown that they can potentially reduce a child's brain development.

There are at least 200 million children right now that are living in developing countries which fail to meet their full developmental potential. As well as undernutrition, infectious disease, violence at home and environmental hazards, all these actions contribute with the loss of their potential. Although there are many different influences that can be hard to change, the nutrition of

any child should be and is something we can control. This sensitive/critical period of a child's brain development which are susceptible to the important nutritional deficiencies are very, which in turn should make the prevention of these long-term deficits which with well-timed and supported nutritional interventions occurring during the foetal period and the first few years of life a very good possibility. The Interventions which are based on the knowledge of these time critical periods, can have the potential to help with the global impact. With the different corrections of the nutritional deficits, it has been estimated, that it could have the power to help with the world's intelligence by up to 10 points. Based on what we now know about brain development within the first 1,000 days, it is found that some of a humans most complex behaviours are made very early on in life; before obvious behavioural showings of those areas. one of the most important aspects of a child's developmental is that nutrition in early life can cause a deviation from a child's normal trajectory due to a nutrient deficiency this can then affect the brain function in adulthood. It is said that a young brain is hugely plastic and is able to recover from early insults and, that it is never too late to try to correct a deficit, although this opportunity does shrink with age. It is suggested that it is better to build a child's brain right in the first place. The best way to achieve this goal is by feeding the foetus, newborn, and the young child's brain. Although the brain will continue to change and develop throughout our lives, scientist believe the fastest period of our brain growth tends to happen in the last trimester of a woman's pregnancy and then the first two years of the child's life. The brain when it is at 5 months post-conception is thought to be a bi-lobed structure that is smooth and resembles a coffee bean. By 9 months, this being full term, it looks more like the walnut-like brain adults have.

Current Challenges



Today's curriculum is now starting to look like Piaget (1956) and Montessori's (1907) theories for example, they want the children to start deciding on what they want to learn, help them to progress at an appropriate level for them. That the work is suitable for the child's ability and age. Making them capable ambitious learning, creative contributors who are also confident, healthy individuals.

Piaget (1956) believed that we construct our knowledge is the heart of nearly all cognitive theories, He believes that these constructions of our knowledge are based on everyone's individual experiences these are then in turn influenced by our biological, emotional, and mental stages of development. Piaget (1956) believed that there are four different stages of development, these are

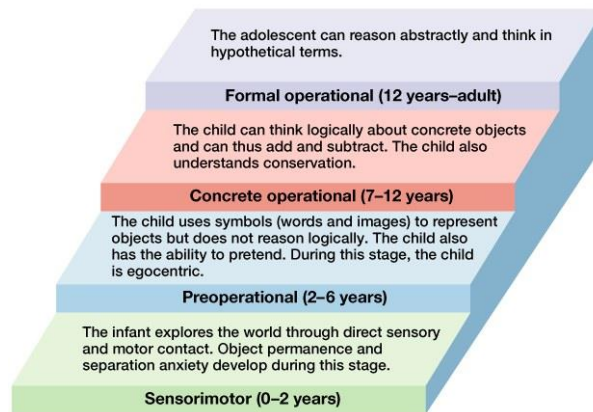
The sensorimotor – this is the stage where we learn through touching and feeling.

The pre-operational – this is the stage where we start to think logically about arranging different objects.

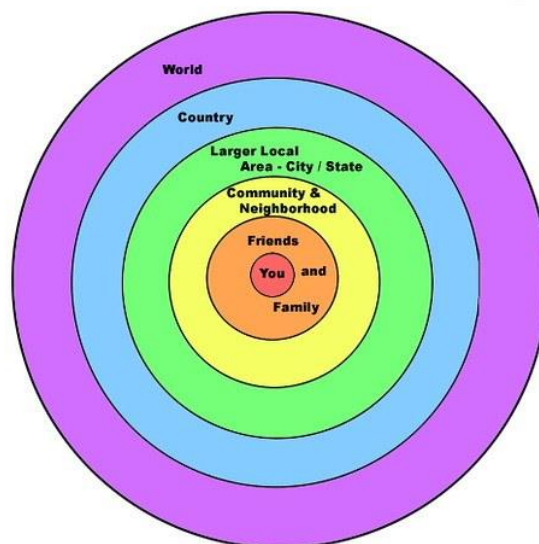
The concrete operational – this is where we start to have the ability to logically think about events and objects and they become more structured.

The formal operational – this is the stage where our verbal reasoning and abstract thinking starts to develop.

Piaget (1956)'s theory also links well to Maria Montessori (1907), who also believed that children learned through first hand experiences which then went on to help with their cognitive development. Like Piaget (1956), Montessori (1907) recognised the how important play is by which all children construct their knowledge. Also, like Piaget (1956), Montessori (1907) put in writing that children have a readiness to learn at the different developmental stages and children should be supported to play through free exploration.



Spheres of Influence and Understanding



Activity Ideas



Forest Schools should be child-centred and an inspirational learning process, it offers holistic growth opportunities with regular sessions. This is a long-term opportunity which supports play, supported risk taking and also exploration of their surroundings. It can help to develop self-esteem and confidence through, hands-on experiences within the natural setting.

Forest School has an ethos which is shared by thousands of trained practitioners from all around the world. Its whole roots and beginning reach back to the open-air idea, friluftsliv, which means free air life, this is way of life in Scandinavia and also where Forest School all began. Since arriving in the UK in 1993 it has grown and developed from strength to strength.

Although Forest Schools in the UK is relatively new, when really it goes back to at least the 19th century and is based on a large heritage for outdoor learning. Educators, naturalists and philosophers in the UK and across Europe such as Ruskin, Baden Powell, Wordsworth, Leslie Paul (these founded the Woodcraft Folk in 1925), then there was Kurt Hahn who was behind the inspiration for outdoor learning education centres and founded Gordonstone and then there's the Macmillan sisters and Susan Isaacs whom laid the foundations for what we call Forest School today.

There are many different Principles and criteria for a good forest schools practice.

Forest School is a long-term activity which should have frequent and regular lessons in a natural environment or woodland area, rather than just a one-off visit somewhere.

- Forest School takes place at least every two weeks, and ideally with the same group of learners.

- A Forest School programme has a structure. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning.
- The initial sessions should establish behavioural and physical boundaries and you should make initial observations to which you can base your future programme development on.

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

- Whilst being in a woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, there are many other sites, that can support a good Forest School practice.
- Forest School aims is for the children to gain a relationship with nature through having regular personal experiences, which will then help to develop long-term, different environmental attitudes.
- Forest School should use natural resources, to help enable ideas.

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

If appropriate, Forest School leaders should aim to make a link between the experiences they have in Forest School to the child's education and home life.

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take risks where appropriate to themselves and the environment.

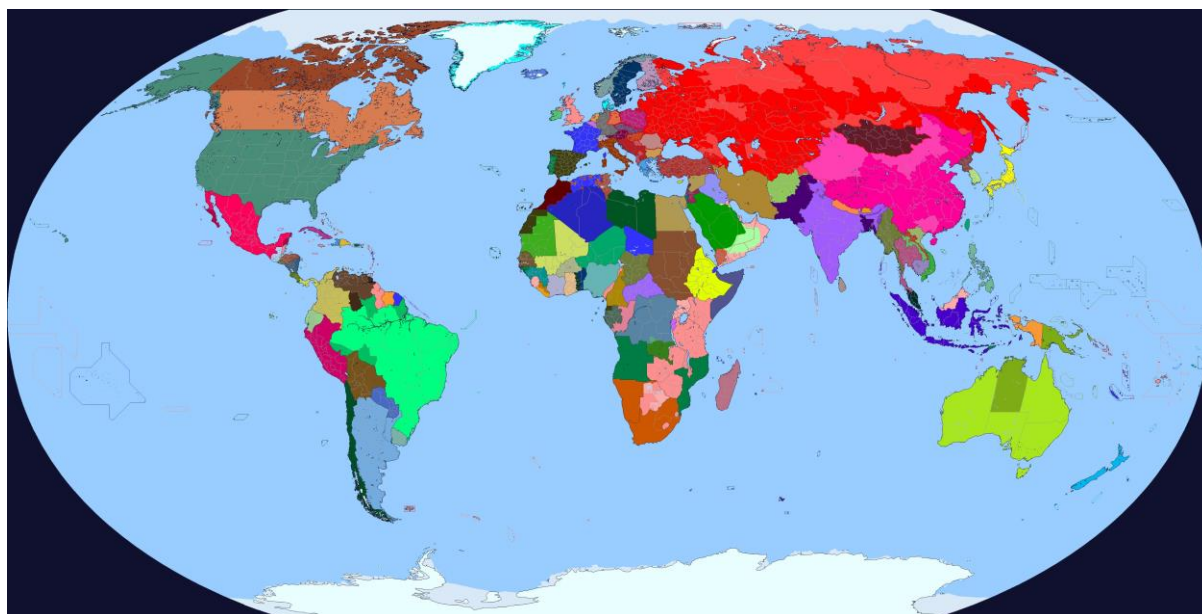
- Forest School helps and is designed to build on a child's, positive attitude, motivation and interests.
- Forest School uses fires and tools but only when this is deemed appropriate for the learners, and is also dependent on you doing a baseline risk assessment.

Forest School should be run by a qualified Forest School practitioner, they also need to continuously develop and maintain their professional practice.

- Forest School must be led by qualified Forest School practitioners; these are also required to hold at least an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification.
- There is always a high ratio of practitioner and adults to the learner's.
- Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks
- The Practitioners should also hold an up to date first aid qualification, this needs to includes paediatric and the outdoor elements of it.
- Forest School has the relevant documents, which contain the different policies and procedures which are required for running Forest School and also which establish the different roles and responsibilities of all its staff and volunteers.



International Approaches



There are many different types of teaching around the world. UK teaching has transformed somewhat in the last 10 years. The traditional methods of teaching are being seen as old-fashioned; we have now started to move towards an holistic environment for our children's learning. Our classroom learning is now beginning to have a mixture of discussions, practical work, games, and projects.

There is a new curriculum in Wales which will be made by many different teachers and practitioners. It will be shaped by getting some of the best ideas from all different countries around the world. Assessments will still be part of the child's learning and every day they will work with their teachers who will help them understand how well they are doing in their learning. Also the way children will begin to learn in primary schools will start to look different. Children will be starting to learn different skills and experiences, as well as expanding their knowledge. Teachers are going to have a lot more freedom in the way they will teach these new skill and experiences and this will then help them find what way is the best outcomes for their learners.

The Scandinavians have a very good successful and innovative education system this then enables children to learn and grow in more natural way. The age for education in the country does not begin until child is 7 years old, they also aren't subjected to any form of mandatory examining until they are 16 years old. Whatever the Students abilities are, all children are taught together, this then goes on to show that this type of learning may contribute to the country having one of smallest gap between the high achieving students and low achieving students.

The Chinese have a teacher-led approach that goes on to produce some world class mathematicians they focus heavily on learning logic behind problems and concepts. Due to China's One-Child policy, they have a different attitude towards the learning and teaching this has meant the expectation that is placed on the only child of the family can be quite heavy, and their educational success then depends on them passing the College Entrance Exam. Their Lessons are mainly teacher-led which is the same as our country, but we might have a surprise by the discipline the children show in classes this is even shown by their youngest of pupils. They also have a lecture style of learning.



Being Inclusive



The most effective way so all children are given a fair chance to go to school, is called Inclusive education this is where everyone can learn and develop their skills which are needed to thrive. Inclusive education is where all children with all types of needs are in the same classroom and in the same school. This means having the same learning opportunities for children who have normally been excluded these would not only be the children with different disabilities, but also children who speak different languages too and allow the different diverse groups to learn and grow together.

Often robbed to their right to learn, most children with different disabilities can often be denied the chance to take part in activities and decisions that can affect them and their learning.

The UNCR wrote 42 articles on the rights of the child here are 3 of the important ones to help with the inclusion of all children

“Article 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.”

“Article 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.”

“Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.”



Professional relationships and their importance



When working with any type of multiagency for example health visitors, speech and language therapists even teaching assistants you must always remember to have consent from whom ever has parental permission for the child. Multiagency working is a very important and proactive part of improving a child's chances as long as they and whom ever is involved with the child come together to work and communicate well (Daly, Byers, Tyler, 2004). If there are any areas of learning which are found to be delayed through the different assessments which are carried out, this then goes on to help the keyworkers to inform any multiagency needed for example physio, social services also whomever else to needs to be informed including the parent/caregiver of the child. (Daly, Byers, Tyler, 2004). Strong links have always got to be made between the child and the keyworker, this is so they can then go on to help the child build a secure and happy attachment, this in turn will help them go on to settle in with whatever their new routine is as smoothly and confidently as possible. Communication in whatever the form is vital, whether this be through the non-verbal or verbal strategies, also responding to them in an appropriate way and showing an interest in what the child is saying to you, or if they are showing you something or even doing a task. (Daly, Byers, Taylor, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner (1977) as well as Bowlby (1956) and Ainsworth (1970) believed that a child's relationship with their main caregiver is an essential part to the child's emotional, social and cognitive development. Bowlby (1956) and Ainsworth (1970) stated that if a child becomes separated from their main caregiver they can become increasingly distressed, also that if strong attachments aren't formed in the early years, that this can go on to have an impact in later life of them maintaining and forming bonds.

Respectful Care and Meaningful Learning



Dr. Emmi Pikler (1930) believed that a baby should be given time and space on the floor whether it be on the carpet or on a blanket so they can then move as he or she wants to and even explore as they want to when able. Pikler stated While their lying on their back, even when they are new born, they can be put in a position where they can be in a ray of sunshine, look at the passing shadows on the ceiling or wall, they'll be able to see people's movement as they go in and out of their field of vision, even looking at their own hands. You don't always have to "stimulate" or entertain the child. As they get older Emmi Pikler (1930) also believed that the Pikler triangle would help with the development of gross motor skills, encourages self confidence as they explore how high they can climb, can help with their concentration as they need to learn about not getting distracted as their climbing.

Another activity is the Treasure Basket, Elinor Goldschmied (1994) believed that Treasure Baskets can offer young babies and children a variety of different materials within easy reach - from which they can then go into the basket and choose what they would like to explore at their own pace and in their own way. Some of the things you could put in are

- Small cardboard box, mini board book
- Teaspoon, wooden spoon
- Pastry brushes, shaving brushes, nail brushes
- Wooden eggcups, pegs, coasters
- Metal tins, lids, spoons, whisks
- Mini-flower pot
- Pinecones, small stones, different shells, wicker balls, sponges
- Small bean bag

Pikler (1930) and Goldschmeid (1994) both stated and believed that children should learn and play in their own time and be allowed to explore without adult interference.





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