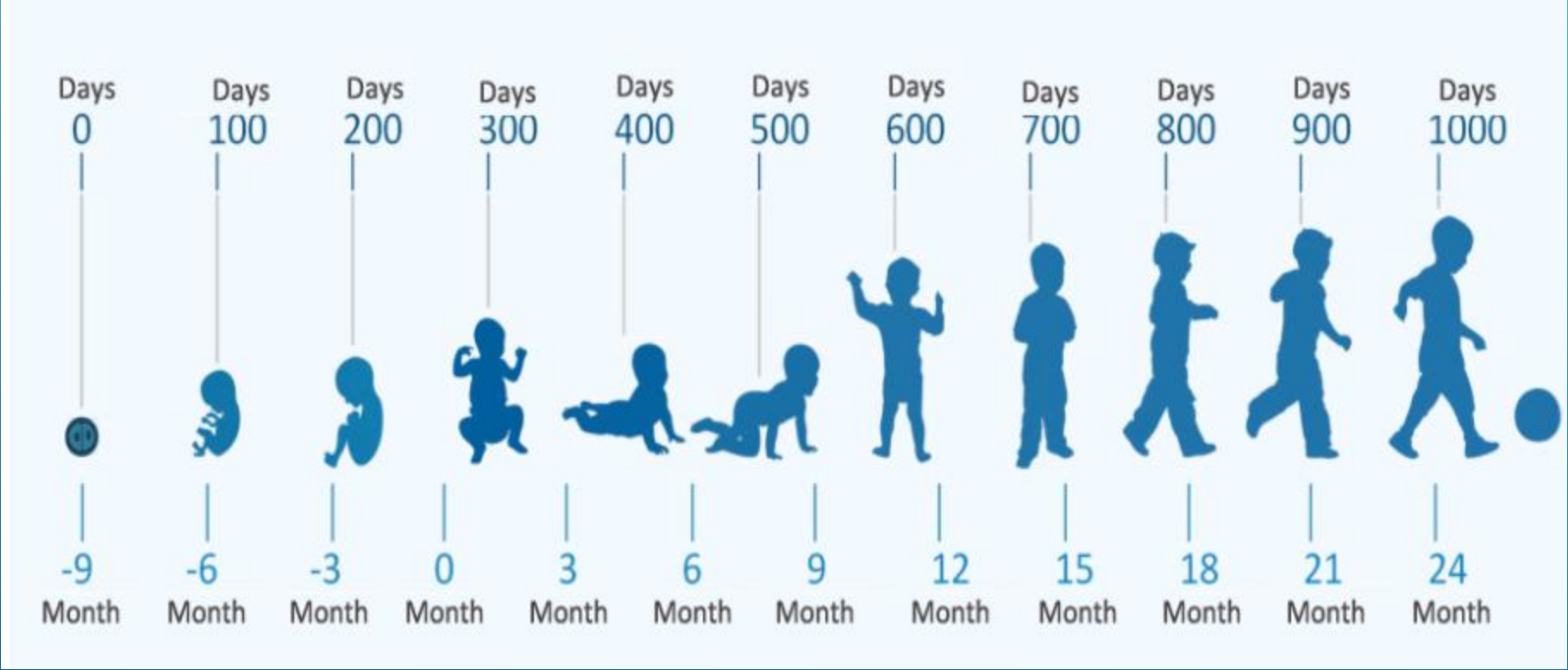


THE FIRST 1000 DAYS

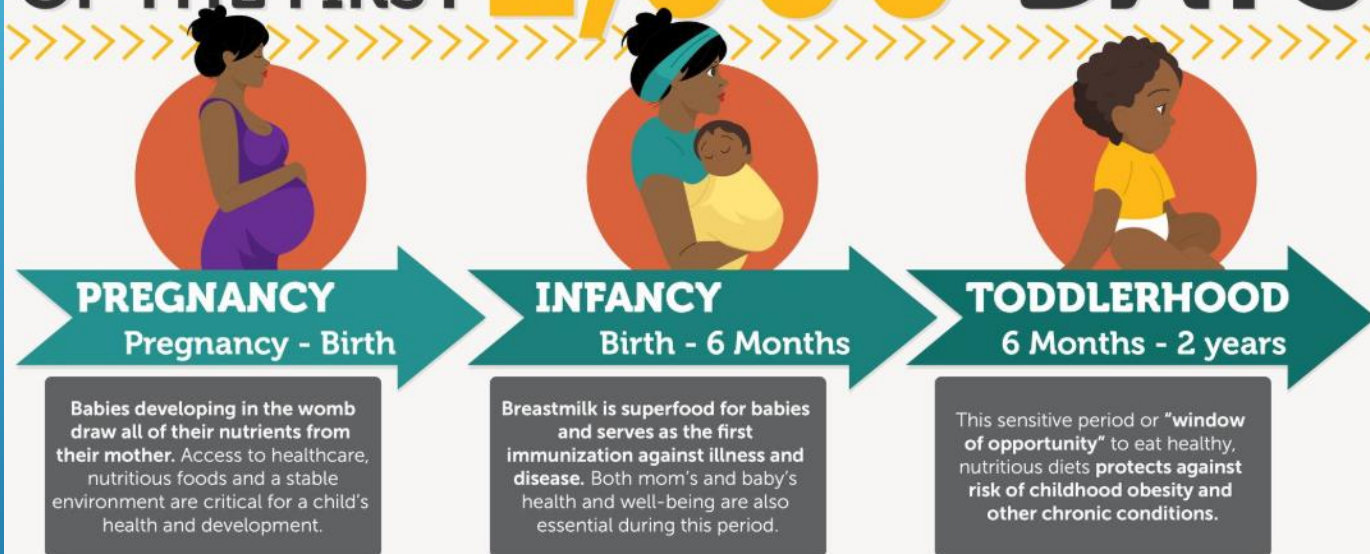
ECEY4005

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used which I may be asked to provide in evidence.



Picture source: IdsMed (2019)

THE POWER OF THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS



Children who get the right nutrition in the first 1,000 Days:



ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE BORN AT A HEALTHY BIRTHWEIGHT.



HAVE A LOWER RISK OF MANY ILLNESSES AND DISEASES, INCLUDING OBESITY AND TYPE 2 DIABETES.



GO ON TO BE BETTER LEARNERS WITH FEWER BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN KINDERGARTEN.



ENJOY IMPROVED HEALTH AND ECONOMIC SECURITY AS ADULTS.

WWW.THOUSANDDAYS.ORG

1,000
DAYS

Source: Early Learning Hub (2024)

What is the first 1000 days and why is it important?

This scrapbook is to convey what The First 1000 days looks like.

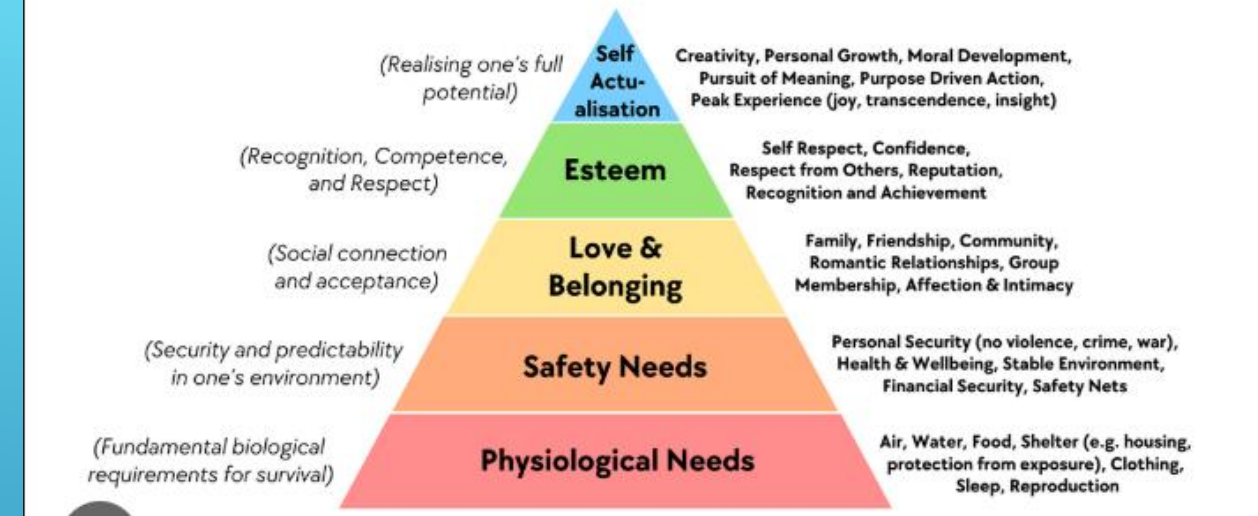
Cusick and Georgieff (2016) describe the first 1000 days as 'golden'. The first 1000 days is from birth to around 2 years old . According to Cusick and Georgieff (2026) the first 1000 days influences a child. To support this the HM Government (2021) states that the first 1000 days are crucial to a child's emotional, physical and cognitive development. It is important for the brain to work by giving the individuals opportunities such as hearing, sight, smell and touch, the four key senses. This helps the child develop and have stronger connections. Likar and Patil (2022) suggests that children's brains make over 1,000 connections over a period. They believe that after birth a child's nutrition, physical development and relationships could possibly have a long-term effect on their health and well-being if they do not have the experiences.

According to UNICEF (2021) a mother's nutrition and health is vital and could have a big impact on a child's brain development and growth. It is important that the mother ensures that she is healthy in the early days of pregnancy as that puts the foundation for the child's physical and cognitive development, which then will benefit the child going on into adulthood life. Health-ni.gov.uk (2025) states that early intervention in a child's 1000-day time frame results in better and stronger learning and development, better well-being and health which leads to better outcomes for the child in the future. Health-ni.gov.uk (2025) states that if a mother's nutrition and health is not good, it can affect the unborn child's weight, long-term illnesses, conditions and their immunity. This can have a long-term effect on the mother's health such as their mental health, and their own health. According to Gale (2022) during a mother's pregnancy, the brain grows rapidly, and neurons begin to form. These neurons are important for a child as they help to develop connections and emotional bonds with their parents or caregivers. He states that good nutrition during this time frame is key for motor skills, cognitive abilities and emotional development. This is all because their brain is growing rapidly over time. Thousand Days (2018) states poor nutrition in the first 1,000 days could lead to damage in the child's brain development, affecting the ability to do well in school. They suggest that it could also later lead to chronic illnesses which can lead to the child having health problems in the future. They state that a well-nourished child is more likely to have long-term benefits such as doing well in school, avoiding long-term illnesses as they have healthier bodies Devex (2025).

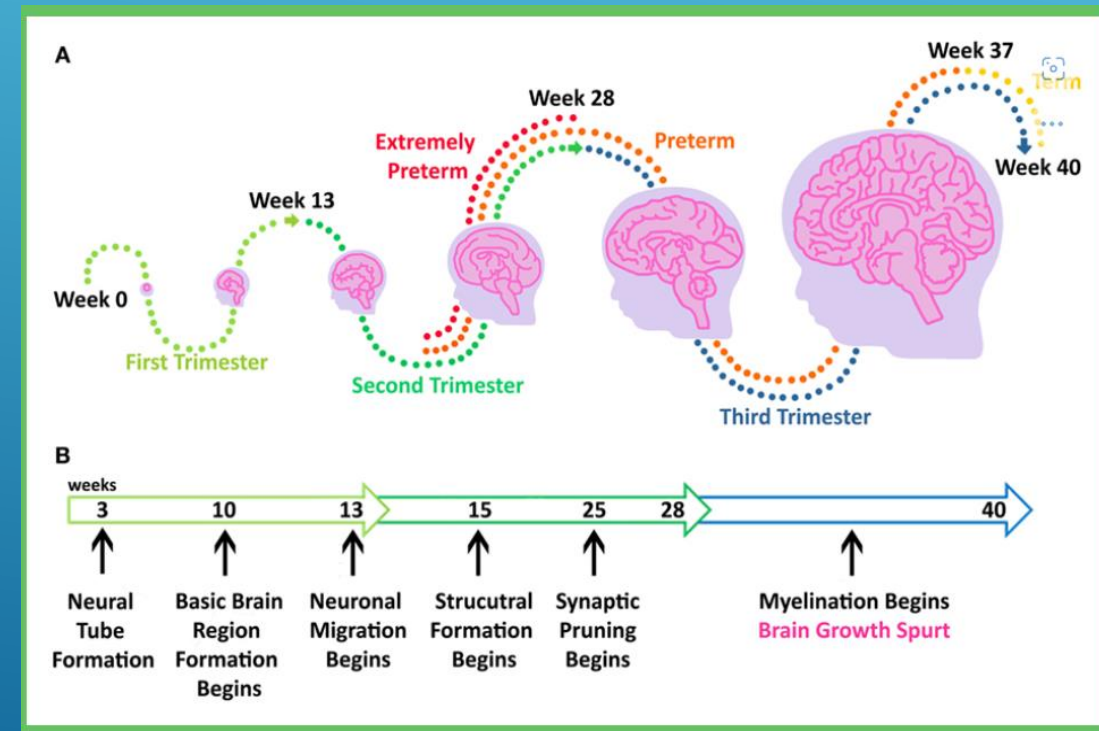
Caregiving

According to Woffindin (2023) babies basic needs are a safe home to sleep, milk, nappies, clothes and love, which looking at the diagram links into Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Caregiving in babies and children includes meeting the child's basic needs which are the physiological needs such as water, food and shelter. Birthto5matters (no date) states that effective caregiving includes dressing, washing, sleeping, feeding, toileting and changing. They suggest that care requires the emotional aspects, relationships, and physical interactions for example reading stories and singing can really help the baby to begin to recognize familiar voices and recognize faces.

Exceptional caregiving is important for babies' brain development according to ParentInfantFoundation(nodate). They suggest that a baby's brain development is influenced on their experiences in the world, these experiences come from their primary caregiver usually their parents. Parents should provide inclusive opportunities for babies for them to learn as they become very reliant on their parents ParentInfantFoundation(nodate).



Picture source: Wikipedia (2021)



Source: Kids.frontiersin. (2018)

John Bowlby

To link with caregiving, John Bowlby's attachment theory as spoken about by Holmes (2014) states that Bowlby wrote about humans having a biological need to form emotional bonds with their main caregiver, especially during early development.

The Four Attachment Styles

Secure Attachment

- Comfortable with intimacy
- Trusts partner; open to commitment
- Independent yet connected
- Communicates needs effectively
- Offers and accepts support
- Most common attachment style

Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment

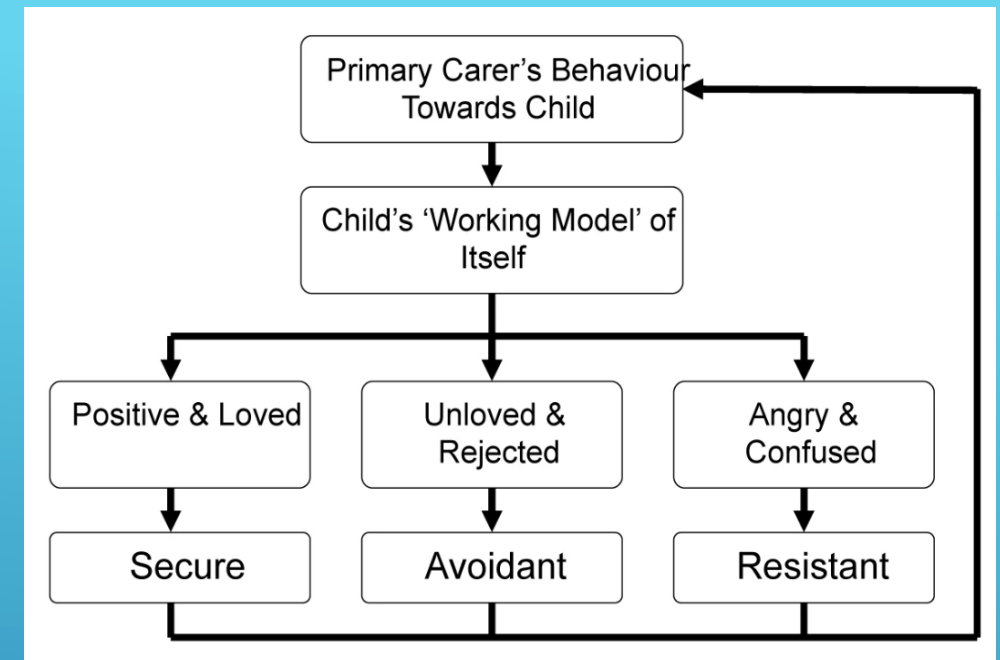
- Fears abandonment and rejection
- Needs constant reassurance
- Emotionally dependent on partner
- Often puts partner's needs first
- May become clingy or demanding
- Bases self-worth on relationships

Avoidant-Dismissive Attachment

- Values independence above all
- Uncomfortable with deep intimacy
- Difficulty trusting others
- Ends relationships when too close
- Suppresses emotional needs
- Self-reliant to a fault

Disorganized-Insecure Attachment

- Conflicting approach to relationships
- Both fears and craves intimacy
- Unpredictable, sometimes volatile
- Drawn to tumultuous relationships
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Least common attachment style



(Source: Simply Psychology 2025)

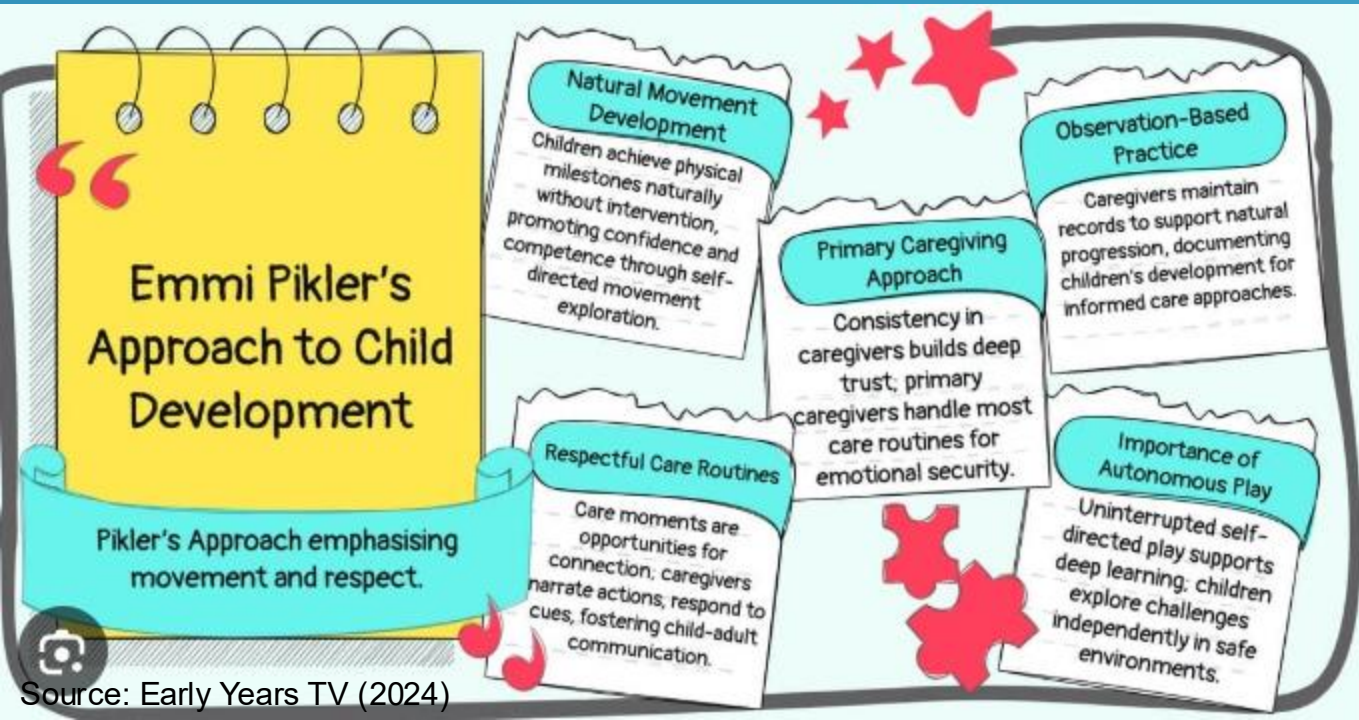
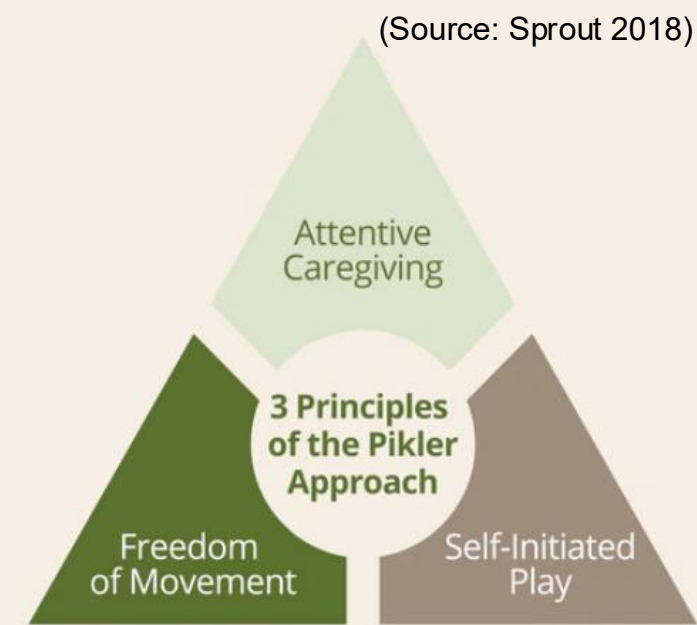
According to London (2023) these relationships help the child to develop their emotional and social develop this influences the child's self-esteem and their emotional regulation and will help the child form bonds with others in the future. London (2023) discusses Bowlby's four attachment development stages which are secure, anxious, avoidant and disorganised as shown in the diagram below. This is all based on the relationship of the child and main caregiver. 107

Source: The four styles of attachment (2022)

Emmi Pikler

The Pikler Approach, which was founded by pediatrician Emmi Pikler focuses on the child's freedom of movement, secure relationships such as the main relationship with their primary caregiver (Pikler USA 2022).

Building on this statement, Brodie (2024) suggests that the Pikler approach looks at key areas such as a child's natural movement, care routines, relationships with caregivers, observations and design. Brodie (2024) suggests that these all create a nurturing and positive environment for children.



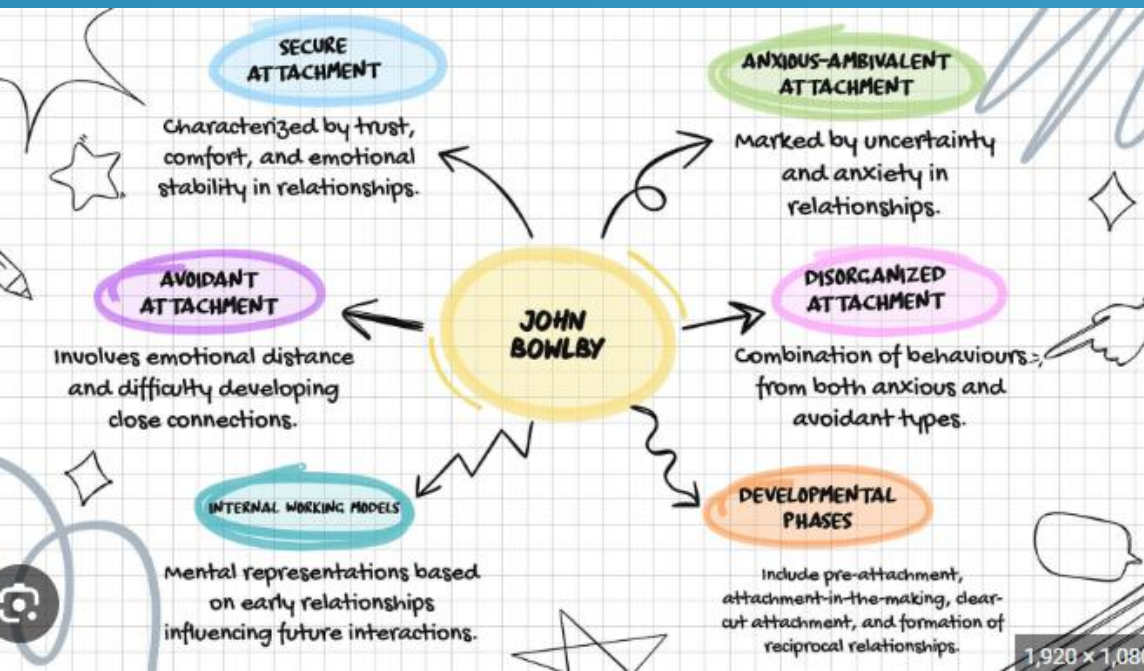
Sprout (2018) suggests that these key principles play off one another. For example, when the child is comfortable physically, they have freedom of movement such as choosing what they want to do, initiating play. If the attachment is secure with their caregivers the environment and needs will feel safe, they will be able to grow, play, use their initiative and develop (Sprout 2018).

John Bowlby and Emmi Pikler

Looking at both Bowlby and Pikler's theory and approach with children there are similarities; however, there are a few differences.

Holmes (2014) stated that Bowlby suggested that children need to form emotional bonds with their caregiver, like this Brodie (2014) stated that Pikler's theory also looks at the importance of a secure relationship with the caregiver.

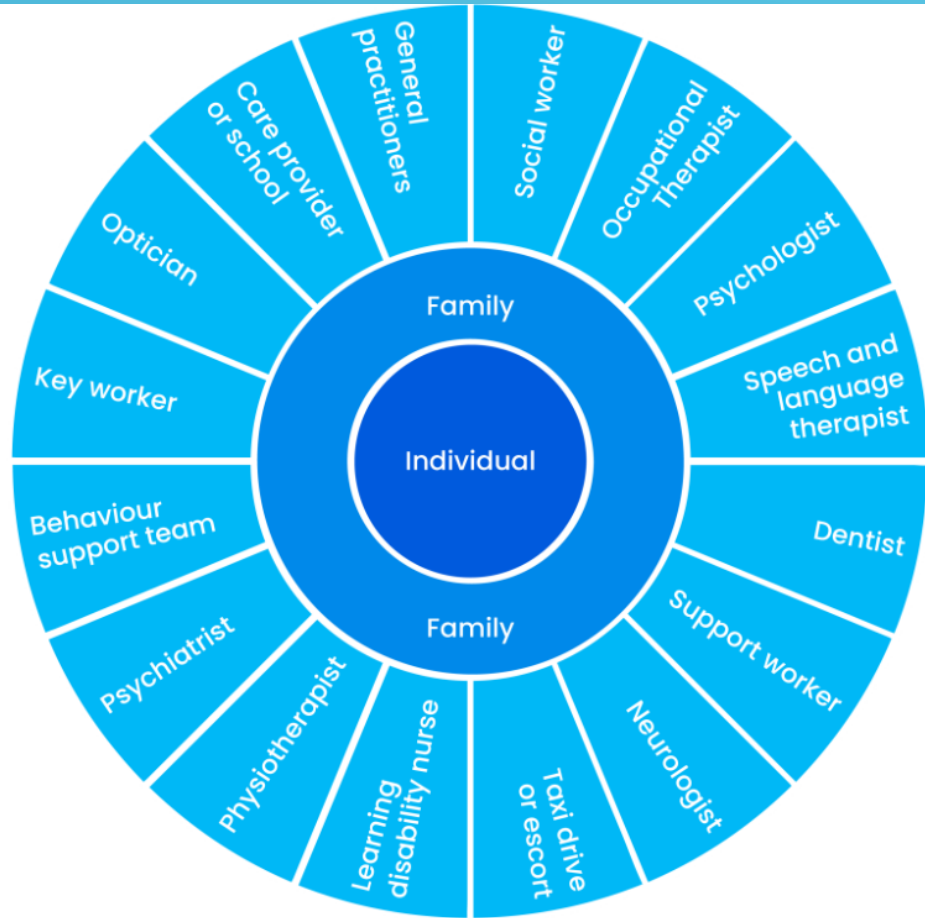
Source: Early Years Tv 2024



(Source: Early Years Tv 2024)

However, Bowlby focuses on the emotional bond that is created between the child and the caregiver, for example the child having difficulty with their emotions when separated from their caregiver. Pikler focuses more on the respectful caregiving, such as building that trust, she believed that caregivers could do this by feeding, bathing or changing them.

Professional Partnerships



According to Department of Education(2021) an Early Years practitioner is vital in supporting children and families during the first 1000 days. They suggest that making positive partnerships early on will benefit the child. Early years practitioners can do this by communicating effectively with parents/carers and keeping them in the loop with their development. For example, in my setting we have a day every few months where parents and carers have the opportunity to come in and look in the children's workbooks to see their progress and development. Brodie (2018) expresses that it is vital to share information with parents and carers about their child, which may include personal information or any sort of concerns that they may have. Early years practitioners must take into consideration that parents/carers have expectations of their child's education and care. According to Brodie (2018) early years settings and their practitioners must provide parents/carers with the information such as activities provided, how special educational needs are supported, the drinks and food provided, the policies and procedures which are in place to support families and children and the early years practitioners that work there. Brodie (2018) suggests that when practitioners, families and outside agencies work together, it starts to build consistency, teamwork, positive partnerships, improve outcomes, and offers a support network for those who are struggling.

Source: Challenging behaviour foundation 2022

Birth to 5 matters (2021) states that when early years practitioners work together with families and outside agencies, it ensures a positive partnership, good practice, and a good understanding of the child’s needs. However, Birth to 5 matters (2021) states that partnerships only work effectively when parents/carers and practitioners work together, otherwise that bond and meaningful connection will not happen.

They continue with discussing that every family has the right to this process, stating that they must feel listened to, included in every decision regarding their child, and they must feel trusted with their child’s developmental process.

Connect Childcare (2024) states the importance of effective partnerships not only with parents/carers but outside agencies such as Health visitors, social workers, speech and language therapists; these all play a vital role in the child’s development. They believe that parents and carers play a very important role in their child’s outcomes. Connect Childcare (2024) believes that these are vital when thinking of the importance of effective partnerships -

Parents	Practitioners	Children
■ feel valued and respected ■ are more involved in their children's learning and development ■ can share information about their children ■ feel their family's values, practices, traditions, and beliefs are understood and taken into account ■ feel comfortable visiting the setting, talking to, and planning with practitioners ■ know more about their children's experiences outside the home and use this information to support their learning and development more effectively ■ understand why early childhood care and education is important ■ have increased confidence in their own parenting skills.	■ understand better the children and families in their settings and use this information to make learning more enjoyable and rewarding for all children ■ can help children develop a sense of identity and belonging in the setting by actively engaging with and finding out about family values, traditions and beliefs, and building on these where appropriate ■ benefit from parents' skills and expertise ■ can provide a more emotionally secure environment for children.	■ feel more secure and benefit more from the educational opportunities given to them ■ move from one setting to another with greater confidence ■ see learning as more enjoyable when their home life is 'visible' in the setting ■ enjoy hearing and seeing their home language in the setting when their home language is neither English nor Irish ■ experience more connections between the different services that support them.

Source: Middletown Autism (2025)

- Regular updates on their child

- Making effort to listen to concerns and questions the parents and carers have about their child

- Offering workshops such as online courses that parents find useful, sessions that could happen in the setting such as how to help with challenging behavior

- Celebrating their child’s achievements and developmental milestones

- Making parents and carers feel welcome in their child’s setting, for example, inviting them to participate in activities with their child, different events, and celebrate their work.

- Invite outside agencies to do workshops or have a chat about any concerns they may have.

However, Public Health (2021) states that there are maternal factors that could possibly affect a child's developmental process, such as

- ❑ Physical Health
- ❑ Mental health and stress
- ❑ Lifestyle – such as smoking or drinking
- ❑ Home Environment – such as a low income, struggling financially, moving from home to home no stability, possible domestic abuse
- ❑ Age- Young mum

Public Health (2021) believes that a child of effected parents has a higher risk of poor physical health, mental health and trouble in social society such as not wanting to make that connection with someone else. These things could affect the parents' ability to bond with their baby, which in the long run could affect the child's ability to develop secure and loving attachments with them or anyone else. Public Health (2021) also states that when perinatal mental health is untreated or unsupported, it could have a big impact on the child's development and the parents' lifestyle growing up.

Again, Public Health (2021) believes that Health visitors have a vital role to play. They have a duty of care to build relationships, offer any type of support to families in need, and to keep children safe. Health visitors have to provide families with a holistic care plan with the family, which further builds on the positive partnerships between both and could possibly reduce the risk of ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences).

The support which is offered in professional partnerships when considering maternal factors is -

- ❑ Health visitors – home visits
- ❑ Perinatal mental health support such as therapy or groups
- ❑ Help financially – Universal credit or healthy start
- ❑ Physical care – Help post birth
- ❑ (GovWales 2021)

Challenges in providing high quality of care in Early years

The Foundation Years (2014) state that children who experience high quality of care are likely to achieve higher outcomes in school, which would further lead to better social skills, cognitive and emotional abilities setting them up for future success. However, Foundation Years (2014) states that poor quality of care provides challenges as it affects the child's development and learning in the long run. They discuss the importance of leadership when dealing with these challenges, it is important for them to have systems in place to minimize the challenges in the workplace, such as identifying what needs to be improved, implement the changes and review if the challenges have been reduced.

Stress and burnout are another challenge when providing a high quality of care, according to The Foundation Years (2014).

When practitioners are stressed, they are on the verge of a burnout. When this happens, The Foundation Years (2014) suggests that this leads to errors in the workplace such as forgetting to do something, bonds being strained between either practitioner and practitioner or the child and practitioner. Which could lead to that member of staff being off work long-term. This increases safeguarding issues as they could have a replacement where the practitioner is not trained enough to deal with specific needs. It is important that a high quality of care is provided to help the child's health, development, and well-being. When these are being met, the partnerships between parents and carers are positive as the best interest of the child is being met (The Foundation Years 2014).

According to Ofsted: Early Years (2024) there are many challenges in the early year's settings. They believe that one of them are workforce challenges and issues such as, lack of professional development which means that the staff are under trained and the children are not getting enough out of them, this could be due to the lack of funding that is being put into the setting or opportunities are not being given. Ofsted: Early Years (2024) stated that high staff turnover can massively affect the children negatively, referring back on what Pikler said about the lack of care, the children are not having that opportunity to create these meaningful bonds with the practitioners. Having a high staff turnover can lead to a lack of consistency such as different routines and lack of time to develop a meaningful relationship. Ofsted: Early Years (2024) discusses that without that consistency with staff, it can be very difficult to recognize a child's needs, linking back to Pikler's lack of care. The relationship between a parent and practitioner will become strained as they believe that their child is not being cared for. Ofsted: Early Years (2024) believes that when a high staff turnover is not managed well, this affects the lack of attention paid to the children's learning and development which could mean that an underlying issue could go under the radar such as a child with Special Educational needs not having their needs met.



Every child has the right to play (Article 31 UNICEF 2023).

ARTICLE 31 (leisure, play and culture)
Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Source: UNICEF 2023

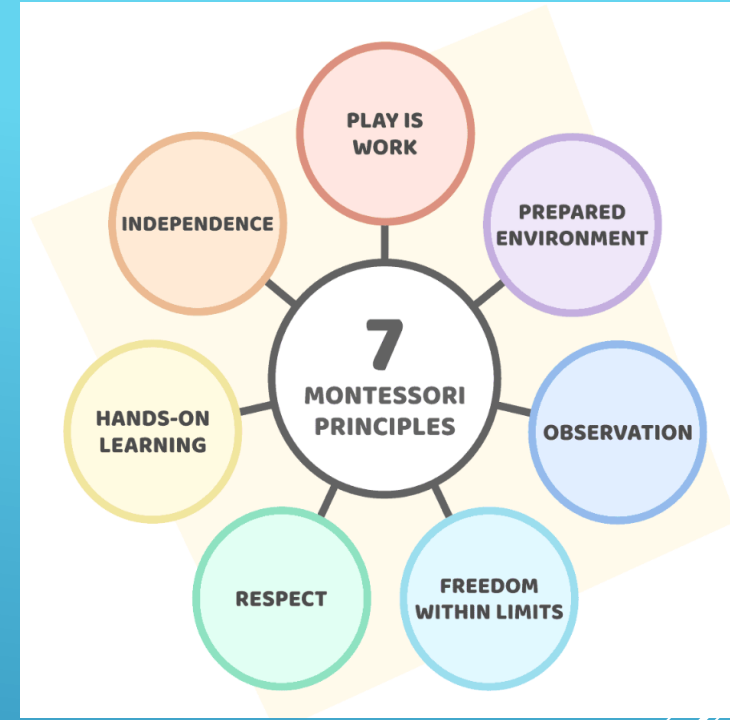
Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia approach, which was developed in Italy, describes children as creative, intelligent, who discover themselves, capability of exploring, and learning in different ways (Education Hub 2020). It discusses child-led learning, encourages babies and children to explore and be curious, and to make sense of the world. Education Hub (2020) believes that the Reggio Emilia approach is there to help strengthen the pedagogical system. It is suggested that the Reggio Emilia approach helps babies and children's creativity, social skills, and learning (Education Hub 2020). The Education Hub (2020) discusses the Reggio Emilia approach and the importance of using loose parts and particular materials when setting out some activities. It is vital to identify the likes and dislikes, by observing and ensuring that the loose parts are being used appropriately.

Source: AlphaBlocks Nursery (2021)

"In the Reggio Emilia preschools
each **child** is viewed
as **infinitely capable,**
creative, and **intelligent.**
The job of the **teacher**
is to **support** these
qualities and to **challenge**
children
in appropriate ways."

- Louise Boyd Cadwell



Source : What is Montessori (2021)

Maria Montessori

Another theorist who encourages self-directed play and hands on learning is Dr. Maria Montessori. Montessori (2025) believes that the Montessori approach is for children to make creative choices whilst learning and being experimental with it. Most of Montessori classrooms are in nature. Montessori (2025) highlights that Montessori's theory was to support any aspect of the child's development, ensuring that the child's likes and dislikes are taken into consideration. Montessori believed that children learn at their own pace and through different experiences offered to them (Montessori 2025).

Loose Parts

According to Daly and Beloglovsky (2015), loose parts enhance children's imaginative thinking and problem solves, as it brings a sense of excitement and curiosity to the children's play. Daly and Beloglovsky (2015) state that loose parts are materials and objects that children can control, move, change, and manipulate whilst they play. Children should be able to carry, line-up, build, put together and take apart the loose parts offered to them. For example, in my classroom one child wanted to use my scarf to make a den. It was too short in the end, but the child was curious to see if it would work or not. Daly and Beloglovsky (2015) also suggest that loose parts should be moveable, for example tyres – they can be moved and stacked up, blankets can be moved to make a den and imaginary picnics; sticks can be moved to make imaginary food in the mud kitchen.



Source: Learn with play (no date)



Source: Fairy dust teaching (2016)

Caldwell et al (2023) agrees with the importance of instructed, child-direct play and the vital role of loose parts in children's learning and activities. They believe that using loose parts outdoors such as pvc tubes, wood pieces, funnels, rocks etc. It is important as it enhances the child's curiosity and imaginary play. It helps children's problem solving and communication skills as it encourages them to talk to others.

Forest school

Knight (2011) describes Forest schools as an outdoor environment which is preferred in wooded environments but not always possible. The Forest school approach happens in all weather conditions; this is to help the children experience all the different types of weather and activities in natural environments. Knight (2011) believes that Forest schools give an understanding of human development, the importance of emotional and social skills, helps to improve physical health and motor skills, problem solving, the child's brain development and the child as a whole. Reggio Emilio approach fits in with the Forest school as it is a child-led operation, it problem solves, and she agrees with learning through natural environments. According to Forest school association (2021), forest schools promote holistic development such as the one hundred languages in Reggio Emilio's approach in schools. Forest schools are a regular and long-term process of regular sessions in natural environments; it is not a one off (Forest school 2021). Forest schools offer children an opportunity to take appropriate risks in the environment and learn from their mistakes.

Source: Woodland Classroom (nodate)



Source: Little Forest schools (2021)





Source: Messy play sensory activities for kids (2023)

Messy play -

This links into meaningful/experimental learning, as the children are getting the opportunities and experiences within the classroom environment and outdoors. When doing an activity, it is important to think if it is meaningful. For example, messy plays. Gascoyne (2018) believes that messy play provides meaningful learning opportunities as it gives the child practical exploration and learning possibilities of messy play. Gascoyne (2018) states that messy play can be dry, wet, or sticky; this enhances the curiosity of children and how they can play with different objects. Some provide that sensory need, such as play-dough, painting, shaving foam, with this the children start asking questions such as 'What can I do with this?'. In some cases, it can help a child's sensory stimulation, meeting meaningful learning as it helps the child regulate themselves. Gascoyne (2018) believes that messy play is fun, exciting, energetic, and it is there to provide endless opportunities.

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