



The first 1000 days.

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Introduction

The first 1000 days of a babies life is the most significant. During the first two years babies must be cared for by their parents or guardian. There are many requirements a baby will need in order to develop and survive such as love, the correct nutrition, strong relationships, a caring environment....Babies will develop at a rapid rate during the first two years. In fact, "by the age of two, a child's brain is already 80% developed" (Leicestershire County Council, 2022). Consequently, babies parents and adults around them must create opportunities for the child to develop their cognitive development. There are many theories used in todays society to support children's development.

Conception to Birth Image



Conception to birth is one of the most important journey's a mother could go through. During the women's pregnancy is it vital the mother is healthy in order for the baby to be healthy too. During pregnancy women should eat heathy and stay active. Women should not smoke or consume alcohol as this could put the baby at risk.

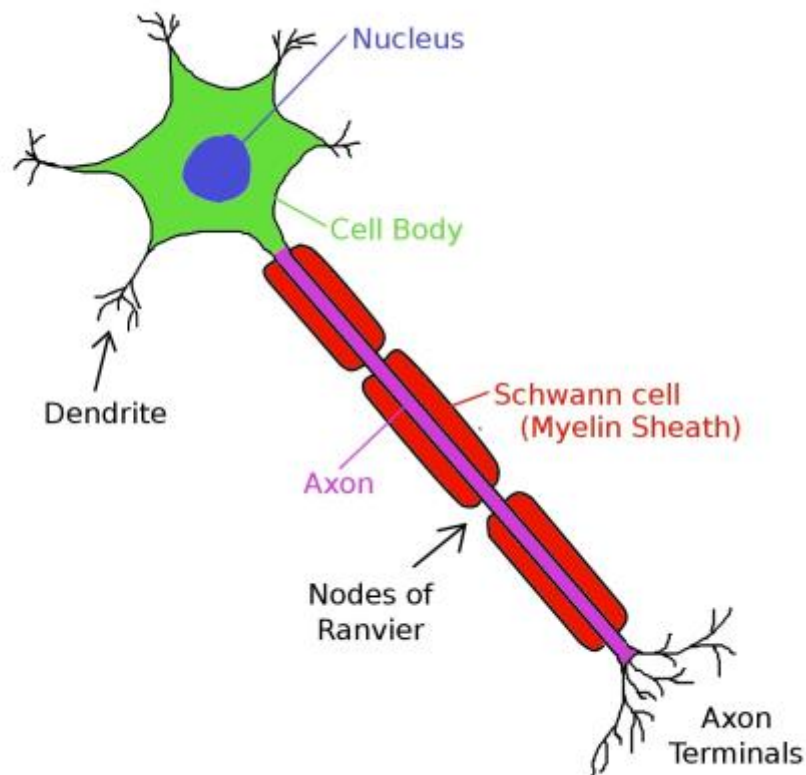
Bonding through touch is a very important for the child as this can make them experience physical affection and love. It has be proven skin to skin benefits both the mother and the newborn. When skin to skin is done it relaxes the mother and the new born baby. It also allows the babies breathing when hearing the mothers heart beat as it feels similar to when being in the womb. Skin to skin can be done during the first few years of a babies life. If the mother is breast feeding the chi ld will be on the mother's bare chest which will be comforting for the baby. (UNICEF, 2022) Bonding through touch can make a relationship between the mother and baby grow stronger. There are many play

groups a child can attend with their mother to help their development. Baby messages are held for baby and mothers.

Neurological development

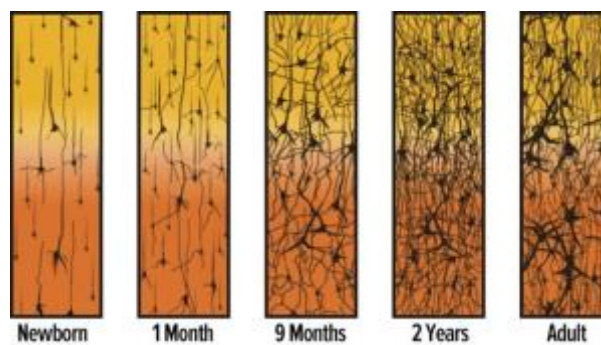


Neurological development is when a baby's brain develops. A baby's brain starts to develop in the womb. Throughout a woman's pregnancy the fetal brain will eventually develop into its shape. Whilst growing the brain will produce folds. This allows the brain to hold more neurons in the folds. A newborn baby has around one hundred billions neurones when they are born. In a baby's brain there are "proliferation of dendritic branches". These are brain cells with branches. These branches is what connects each cell to one another. Experiences impact the brain. The more experiences the baby is given, the more brain cells will be made, therefore the brain will then develop and enlarge. The term Pruning can happen in a brain. This is where brain cells die because the connections are not being used and not becoming strong so the neurones die off. If a child is not given opportunities to learn or repeat past experiences pruning could happen in a baby's brain. (UCLA Health, 2017).



1 - This is what a brain cell looks like.

(Source: Biology, 2022)



2 - This image shows the neurones inside a brain cell. In the newborn brain as you can see there are neurones with no connections. In the one month image there are the same amount of neurones. Nevertheless these neurones have branches coming off the cells where connections have been made. In the next image, the nine month brain has many connections and they are becoming stronger. In the two years brain there is still the same number of neurones but the connections have been made. The connections have been repeated so therefore the connection have become stronger. In the adult brain the connections have increased in size and become a lot thicker over the years. However, pruning has happened in this brain as there are less neurones.

(UCLA Health, 2017)

How can adults around babies help support the development of building connections?

- Playing

- Reading
- Singing
- Interactions with adults like parents or practitioners

"Serve and return" is how an adult can support a child's development. This is when a child will communicate by doing an action and then the adult will respond by speaking back. For example, a child may babble and then the parent could respond by speaking back or doing an action. This gets the baby involved and their brain will develop as a result. Adults can read, sing or talk with the baby which will engage with the child. (Albert family wellness, 2022)

Embodiment is where children can learn whilst using their mind and body movement. It is a fun way to get the child to involve their body whilst enjoying and being taught (Waag Technology and Society, 2012). Embodiment can support a child's "Self-growth, awareness and develop mindfulness" as stated by Shoppe (2021). Embodiment can benefit the child's development holistically. It involves physical, cognitive and social development. An example of embodiment in a classroom that a child can do is singing and doing actions whilst doing their times table. The child will be moving whilst doing maths. This requires multitasking and thinking skills. (Shoppe, 2021)

Enabling adults

Any adult that cares for a baby should be an enabling adult. When an adult works with a baby they should be creating a loving environment for the baby to develop holistically. According to Stacey (2020) "teachers and caregivers of young children are at their best when they follow the children as for their own adult curiosity, learning with them and about them. It is important children are observed and their interests are taken into consideration. Albert Bandura's development theory states that "observation plays a critical role in learning (Cherry, 2020). Teachers must always be professional around the children and act like role models. Bandura also believed in this. He believed children copy the behaviour of adults. Bandura produced an experiment called the Bobo doll experiment. It is well known in today's society. The experiment was conducted to investigate if children copied adults around them. In the experiment the children that observed the adults hitting the Bobo doll also did the same when they saw the Bobo doll. The children that observed the adults acting positively towards the Bobo doll behaved in the same way. (McLeod, 2014)

Vygotsky believed children will learn through interacting with people around them and by doing this the individual will learn about the world around them. He introduced 'zone of proximal development', this is in-between what a child can achieve without help and what a child can attain with support and guidance from an educated adult. Adults that have more knowledge than a child can help the child to increase their skills and extent of understanding (Cherry, 2020). Vygotsky suggested that if a child is in the proximal zone and an adult supports the child, with the correct assistance the child will have enough resilience to achieve the task. This adult must be a person who is more educated than the child. (McLeod, 2019)

Professional love.

Professional love is done in a childcare setting. This is when a practitioner will comfort a child when they need support. When a practitioner is caring for children their priority is to keep the child safe. During the time they look after them they may support by giving professional love. There are many

ways professional love can be shown towards children such as giving the child a hug when they are hurt or sad or listening to a child when they're distressed. However, professional love is different to the love a parent would give. The children should feel comfortable with every staff member in a setting and should feel like they can talk to any adult about anything that may worry them. In a nursery setting practitioners will have to support the babies needs. at this young a baby may communicate by crying and therefore the staff members there will have to rock the baby and show professional love to make the child feel safe. (Davis, 2021).

This topic relates to Abraham Maslow. Abraham Maslow has a theory which is about children needed hierarchy needs before they can function. Maslow hierarchy need theory is split into five categories which are; physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self actualisation. Maslow believed children or adults must start at the bottom of the pyramid which starts with basic needs, this need must be fulfilled before moving up to the next need. The first need is called physiological needs which is basic human survival like food, sleep, shelter, warmth. This need must be met for us to be able to survive. This was the important need Maslow believed in. Security and safety should be met after the first one. Safety and security can be met by having strong relationships. for example, a baby will feel safe with their parent or guardian or someone who they are familiar with. The third need is love and belonging. This need links to professional love. Children must have love and belonging in their life in order to feel safe and develop healthy. Without love a child will feel lonely and will not develop to the best they can. This is Maslow's third need in order to succeed, if a child did not feel love and belonging in care then they wouldn't be able to succeed to their best ability. (McLoed, 2020)

Jean Piaget (Source: Wikipedia common, 2022)

Jean Piaget was a theorist. He produced a theory about cognitive development after observing and working with children for many years. Piaget came up with four stages of a Child's cognitive development. The four stages of cognitive development are; sensorimotor intelligence, proportional thinking, concrete operational thinking and formal operational thinking. It was important that these four stages:

- Must happen in the same order
- No stage can be skipped
- Each stage is different and there are visible changes
- No stage can be done without completing the one from before

(Kurt, S, 2020)

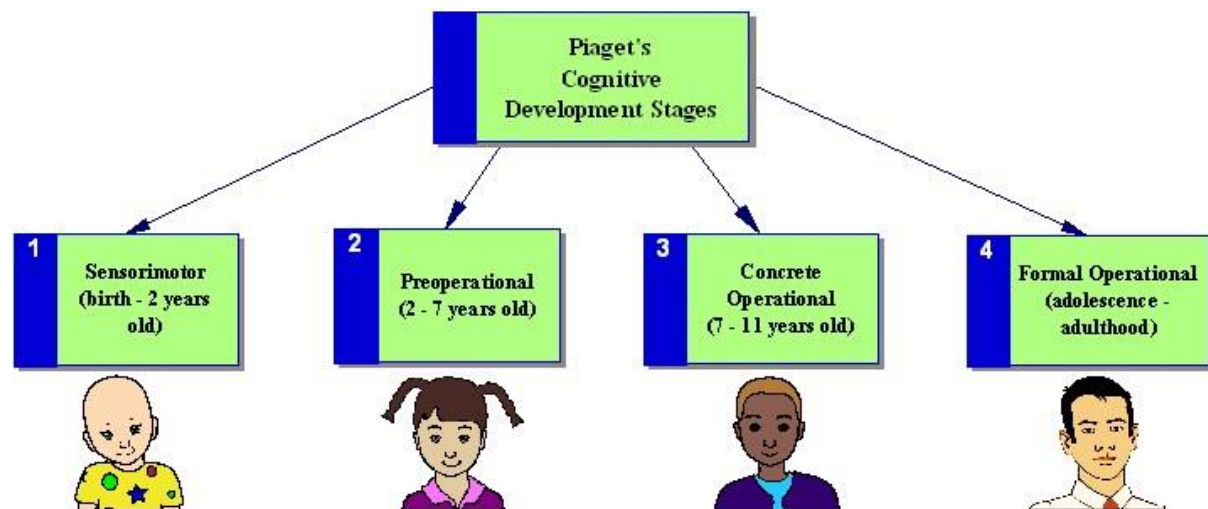
Sensorimotor Intelligence (Birth to Two)

The sensorimotor intelligence is linked to the first 1000 days of a babies life because it is the stage for babies from birth to age two. This stage is where Piaget believes they learn the world around them by using their senses. The five senses are; touch, taste, smell, sight and sound. Young children learn at a rapid speed, when they learn new things they develop different schemas. The child will make sense of the world by organising information into different schemas. As the child receives more information they will make sense of the world around them and will form different schemas when understanding the difference between things. For example, a child has a pet dog. The child will know this animal as a dog. When the child comes across a cat for the first time. The child will

automatically think it is a dog and refer it to their dog schema as this animal has four legs and is furry just like the child's dog. Once the child is educated and told that it is a cat, the child will make a cat schema. This will become a pattern however the child will learn more and more through experiences.

(Lumen Learning, No date)

Whilst going through this stage babies should be able to 'object permanence, self-recognition, deferred imitation and representational play.' After being a couple of months old a baby should recognise objects that they have been shown before. (McLeod, 2020) When the toy disappears the child will forget about the toy and think it had disappeared.



3 - (Source: Kay C. Wood, Harlan Smith, Daurice Grossniklaus, 2014)

Enabling environments and experiences

The environment a baby is brought up in has an impact on their development. The environment should be calm, loving and supportive. When a child feels safe they will explore without hesitation. In a childcare setting both indoor and outdoor are equally important to a child's development. This will allow children to familiarise the world around them by having access to indoor and outdoor areas in settings. Roy (2015) states that the environment should be seen as a "third teacher". Therefore each environment should have resources to suit the children's interests. The environment the children learn in should be full of activities where the children can learn by doing. Vygotsky is a theorist who believes in 'hands on experiences' stated by Cherry (2020). The environment should offer independence for the child as well as group work.

Every day a child should be offered experiences to stimulate their brain. This can be done by allowing the children to get involved with daily routines. In the morning children should be encouraged to get dressed independently whilst the adult supports them. They should show the child how to do it but not do it for them as this will not allow them to learn. This is hands-on and a life skill. Children can develop fine motor skills whilst dressing themselves. The child can express themselves through dressing. They should be able to choose the top they like or the socks. This is a good way for children to make choices for themselves to develop their cognitive skills. Having an adult's full attention will allow their bond to develop.

There are many activities practitioners can plan using the environment without having to spend much money. Treasure baskets is a fun and beneficial activity the children will enjoy. Treasure baskets are made with resources in the classroom. The child can then explore the materials. The practitioner can get the child to do an activity using the treasure basket materials. This will help develop the child's fine motor skills and cognitive development. (Goldschmied, 2004)

It is important that every childcare setting is inclusive. This means practitioners teach whilst being respectful to every child. Every child is unique and has different requirements and therefore it is the professionals job to support every child's needs. The setting should also be diverse which means staff will be respectful of children and other staffs background. Settings should encourage the children's backgrounds and teach about different religions. this way children can be aware of different backgrounds and learn about being inclusive.

Emmi Pikler



4 - 1902 - 1984 (Source: *Familias en ruta*, No date)

Emmi Pikler believed children should have the right to "freedom of movement". In the early 1900s Pikler toys were specifically made based on the Pikler approach. For example, the Pikler triangle, Pikler climbing arch and wing were produced and can be purchased in todays society. Children from birth to age five can use these frames. These toys are beneficial for children's development. Pikler toys are beneficial for children because they encourage children to climb using gross and fine motor skills (Shop pompom, 2019). A Pikler toy can be used in many different ways. The climbing frame can be all different shapes, colours and sizes.





5 - This video clip is an example of a child using a Pikler Toy. The adult in the video allows the child to explore without being interrupted.

<http://www.MemorizingtheMoments.com>

There were seven principles Pikler believed needed to be established when working with children. Practitioners should give children in their care their **"full attention"**. When children are given full attention by an adult it allows them to fully concentrate on one activity. **"Slow down"**. Children will work better in a calm and peaceful environment. **Build "Trust whilst doing caring activities"**. A child should be given full attention when taking part in daily activities. This will strengthen the bond between the child and carer. **"With" and not "To"**. A practitioner should explain to the child how to do an activity rather than doing it for them. if a child is given time to carry out this activity they will be able to understand the activity and remember the steps for next time. **"Babies should never be**

put in a position". Babies will carry out movement by themselves when they are ready. Pikler had a strong view about how babies shouldn't be pushed into a position they cannot get out from. A baby will explore and get into a position on their own. The baby is more likely to remember the experience whilst going through different emotions if they do it by themselves. **"Uninterrupted playtime"**. Pikler believed babies are able to entertain their selves if you allow the baby enough time to explore and make sense of there world around them. Babies will learn more when they are not interrupted when in the middle of doing something. When they are interested they will concentrate which should not be stopped by someone else. **"Recognises a babies cue"**. it is important to respond to a baby when they need something. The carer should be able to recognise this and support them. (Oskar's Wooden Ark, 2020)

Maria Montessori. (source: La Historia, 2014)



Maria Montessori has a similar theory as Emma Pikler. Maria Montessori also believed children should be respected by adults. She belied children should be guided through activities and adults should be there to support and not be an 'obstacle' as stated by Lopez (2022). The role of the adult plays an important part of the Montessori approach. In Montessori education children are observed and given the appropriate resources based on the child's needs. The teachers that work in this environment must teach children while giving them the freedom to work independently. The environment in a Montessori school is designed in a way which benefits the children there. For example a Montessori classroom will be:

- A neutral colour so that children can concentrate without being distracted
- Quiet and calm
- Artwork is placed at children's level

- It is separated with different learning areas
- Enough space for the children to move freely

(Lopez, 2022)

Different types of approaches in childcare settings.

Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia approach is used in many schools around the world. The curriculum is based on the child. This means they value the child's interests in order to teach. This is done by observing and communicating with the children's family about their hobbies. This will be put into the teachers planning to arrange the best way to teach the children. In the classroom the teacher works with the children as a supporter. By doing this they can observe the children's progress and reflect on their practice. The environment the children work in is also important. The environment is designed based on the children also. In the classroom they allow children to bring in items from home to make it comforting. This approach is similar to Maria Montessori's.

(Scholastic, 2021)

Te whariki is the curriculum used in New Zealand. The curriculum is based on;

- well being and learning
- age appropriate content
- tolerance and respect for cultural values and diversity
- value consistent with upcoming school needs.

The curriculum is child centred and play is a very important part of it. Early years in New Zealand focus on resilience and risk taking before literacy or numeracy. The curriculum have principles which are "empowerment, holistic development, family and community, relationships". There are many goals the early years curriculum states needs to be achieved. The first one is that the environment should support the child's health and well-being. The environment should also be a safe for the children to learn in. The next goal is for children to experience an environment with the close family. This means they should involve the family and also make connections with home life and school life. The third goal is that the environment they learn in should be inclusive and all children should be treated equally. Number four is communication. The children under this curriculum should learn communication and symbols of their culture. The final goal is to explore. Children should experience play and exploring.

(Geteduca, No date)

Education in Denmark

In Denmark the early years education is different to education here in the united kingdom. In Denmark 10% of kidder-gardens are in the forest. The children will learn in the forest every day in all types of weathers. Every forest school will be different depending on where it is located. The children are given many opportunities through the day to learn. There are no boundaries in the forest school as the teachers trust the children. In Denmark there are no yearly inspections to inspect the forest schools and teachers do not have to carry out risk assessments. Some danish

parents believed children should learn in the outdoors instead of allowing the technology world. After forest kindergarten the children will attend a school. in forest school children will learn how to use tools such as real knives. The teachers will trust them to use them responsibly. In Denmark the teachers there believe children should be taught four learning steps; "to be able to". "to experience", "to enjoy" and "to understand" (Williams, 2022).

(SBS Dateline, 2016)

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