



First 1000 days UNI

Beginnings are important

The first 1000 days has been proven to be an extremely important time in a child's life, as it said it Bellini J (2016) *Cited in the golden 1000 days*. It could be said that it lays the foundations for the child's future. Whilst still in the womb a baby will have neurons already within their brain make up, these are awaiting different stimulus to help them connect. Already the baby will be forming relationships with the outside world, becoming soothed with mam and dads voice, feeling the endorphins and feelings that mam feels. This can affect the growing foetus depending on mums' mood, feelings, health and support within her life, this being the reason several clinical trials have been carried out on the affect's depression, stress and drug and alcohol abuse has not only on the growing foetus, the child after birth, their abilities and health as is said by Kinsella M, BA, Monk C ,PhD *Cited by impact of Maternal stress, Depression & anxiety on Foetal Neurobehavioral development*. Women's diet, and mood is now made more of a priority during pregnancy and after birth, as the diet a pregnant mum consumes has been shown to have an impact on birth weight and cognitive and motor development, seafood and fatty acids have been shown to affect the neurocognitive development. One finding is that things like cigarette smoke and alcohol seem to affect the growing foetus more in mothers that are also experiencing trauma or stress within their daily lives. It is also said that a mother under stress or with her own mental health struggles, is more likely to have a child that will suffer poor mental health in their future, emotional adjustment issues or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). With this knowledge mother and foetus

monitoring and diet control during pregnancy, could help babies have less problems after birth and throughout life. Women's cultural background could influence how much monitoring and support they receive, some cultures believe that less intervention during pregnancy and birth, is more beneficial to both mother and child as is said by S Donovan, Health sociology review, some feel screening for certain conditions in both mother and child is to be going against nature. A dietary difference varying within cultures is also a consideration as is said by Chakona G, Shackleton C (2019) *Cited in Food taboos and cultural beliefs influence food choices and dietary preferences among pregnant women in the eastern cape*. Areas of south Africa often highly restrict a pregnant lady's diet as they believe that a lot of foods will harm the growing foetus and have an impact on labour and a baby's shape after birth. Their beliefs were passed down from generations, and often resulted in malnutrition. More information and guidance would benefit these cultures and result in a healthier and happier pregnancy. From the moment of conception, a baby's future health, happiness and wellbeing are in Preparation. The months during pregnancy will never be a better time to start looking after health, both mental and physical. Classes such as parenting classes and nurture classes have become part of our society and are regularly attended as is said by Renkert S, Nutbeam D (2001y) *Cited in opportunities to improve maternal health literacy through antenatal education and exploratory study*. It's also a chance to talk over any concerns with professionals in their field or discuss issues as a group, often highlighting that others could be going through the same worries and issues.

A holistic view





From the time of birth, a holistic view of the baby's environment, genetics and relationships will form who they are to become. As is said by Shore A (2011) *Cited in the right Brain implicit self lies at the core of Psychoanalysis. The biological control system in the brain can regulate itself on a more effective level if driven by emotional balance.* Attachment is seen as one of the main focuses of regulating and adapting the organisms of the brain as is said by Rose et al (2003) *Cited in Why love matters.* Babies are born with the foundations to develop their visual recognition, their memory skills, the speed in which they can problem solve are all the starting points for their cognitive development. These skills can either be strengthened by the environment and the people around them or have a detrimental effect. Bowlby J (1978) *cited in Attachment theory and its therapeutic implications, Adolescent Psychiatry,* says that very early experiences of a child cannot be reversed, they become part of the child's make up and follow them into adulthood, however with later research Bowlby himself seemed to change opinion on this slightly, thinking that early experiences can be reversed with the right care, but that it would still be remembered by the child. As was said by Rutter M (1995) *Cited in Clinical implications of attachment concepts: Retrospect and prospect.*

Attachments play a part in who we are to become!



The National
Infertility & Adoption
Education Nonprofit

Creating a Family

8 Tips for Deeper Attachment

1. Creating attachment in our children begins with self-understanding of how our childhood attachments affect our current life.
2. Let go of expectations for how your child should be, and accept the child you have.
3. Give your kids the language of emotions by actively discussing how they, you, and others are feeling. When reading books with your child, stop and reflect on how the character might be feeling.
4. Take the long view in parenting by focusing on what motivates a child's behavior rather than doing whatever works in the moment to stop the behavior.
5. Create a culture of compassion in your family by acknowledging and honoring differences.
6. Discuss a shared experience with your child and notice the differences in what you each remember. The point is the shared telling of the story, focusing on the event and the emotions, rather than on accuracy. .
7. Create a family book with all members of the family. Include a chapter for each family member to create a story in images and words about themselves, and chapters on family vacations, celebrations, traditions, etc.
8. Hold regular family meetings allowing family members to share what they think about upcoming events, things that have happened, the family schedule, etc.

* Information from Importance of Parental Attachment Styles in Adoption Webinar with Dr. Dan Siegel © Creating a Family
Available from www.CreatingaFamily.org, the national adoption and infertility education and support organization.

The attachments they make in the future and the care they receive could heal past experiences. As was said by Sigmund Freud, children gain their confidence and belief in themselves from the environments and people around them the relationships that are formed and how the child is treated within those relationships, if they are treated well, loved and cared for and their needs met there will be no reason for them to heal as the child will thrive and know how to love and care for others in return.

There are different types of attachment and reasoning behind why the type of attachment is formed. Avoidance attachment, seems to be when a child has learned from their parents to bury their feelings instead of show their feelings, for example a boy could be taught from a very young age to not show if they are upset instead to show a front of feeling happy when inside they are not, they could learn this behaviour from watching a parent put on a front of being ok when they have worries as was said by Rholes W S, Simpson J A, Friedman M (2006) *Cited by Avoidant attachment and the experience of parenting*. Attachment styles can be carried on throughout generations, with parents not knowing any other styles of parenting, this is when an exceptional practitioner could play a big part in a child's early life by being the secure attachment the baby would benefit from, but also showing parents how to create an attachment to their child if they are struggling to form a bond, the relationship between a practitioner and the parents or careers is so important, sharing information in these early days can be beneficial for both, nobody will know this child better than the parents, so passing valuable information to a practitioner can help them carry on with preferred routines and ensure any problems that arise can be addressed and solutions found as was shown in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of individual development (1992) cited in Ecological systems theory looking at the child holistically there are lots of elements involved, the child's interaction with mum or dad or close family members, siblings or grandparents who all have a big part in their genetic makeup but also the day to day experiences which will shape the child's view of the world. Then there is the direct involvement of the child the places they are and the interactions they choose to have with others. The involvements beyond the child's control for example if professionals have been involved. The interactions others choose towards the child, a neighbour or the colleagues at their parent's place of work. Then there is the legal system or the culture the child has been born into; all this information shared can help the practitioner that will form a special bond with the child to know them as well as they need to. After the birth of a child a mother's hormones can feel irregular, and she can feel she has a lot to do to keep this little new-born alive, and it can carry on feeling like this for months and years to come, as is said by Cusk (2004) *cited by Why love matters*. A baby's needs can sometimes feel like the needs are your own, a mother and her baby can start to feel like you're the same person, a mother's instinct and hormones from pregnancy can leave a mum completely in tune with her baby. However on occasions a mother can struggle to make that bond with the baby, leaving her feelings of failure rather than joy, it could be that the mum is struggling with her feelings, and isn't then able to provide the baby with the engagement they need in the very early days and beyond to form the secure attachments they need, secure being another form of attachment, as is said by Simmons B I, Gooty J, Nelson DL, Little L M (2009) *Cited in Secure attachment : implications for hope, trust, burnout and performance*. This is the attachment needed by a child as it will show them how to form relationships their whole life, this is the attachment to which they gain trust, familiarity, love and a feeling of safety, for a new-born this could be a smile and the holding of their hand, their needs being met, cuddles, and a gaze held telling them without words how much they are loved, As was said by Turner (2000) *Cited in Why love matters*. As the world starts to become a vision and people start to be seen by the baby, facial expressions start to become even more important, a child can tell a lot by looking into your face, they can see if your happy, sad, upset or even angry, it is thought this ability could even be present as young as new-

born. It is said by A Shore (1994) *Cited in Understanding child development 0-8 years*, that the positive looks a baby receives help the baby's brain to grow, it promotes the growth of the emotional, intelligent and the social part of their brain. It helps the neurons that are present at birth connect and releases pleasurable endorphins in both mum and baby. However, this is a perfect scenario, the case might be that the baby isn't receiving the touch or lovingly gazes that is so needed, if mum isn't able to provide this a baby can form a close attachment with dad or siblings and grandparents, anyone that is able to meet their needs and make them feel safe, wanted and loved. This can also be provided by a keyworker at a childcare setting, in the form of a secondary attachment, as is said by R Bowlby (2007) *Cited in Babies and toddlers in nonparental day care can avoid stress and anxiety if they develop a lasting secondary attachment bond with one caregiver who is consistently accessible to them*, it can be a good thing for the child in some cases to form a secondary attachment in the absence of their main attachment, this could give the parents a break, or enable them to gain much needed financial help in the form of going back to work. A secondary attachment must be worked on, and the trust and love of the child earned.

Challenges!



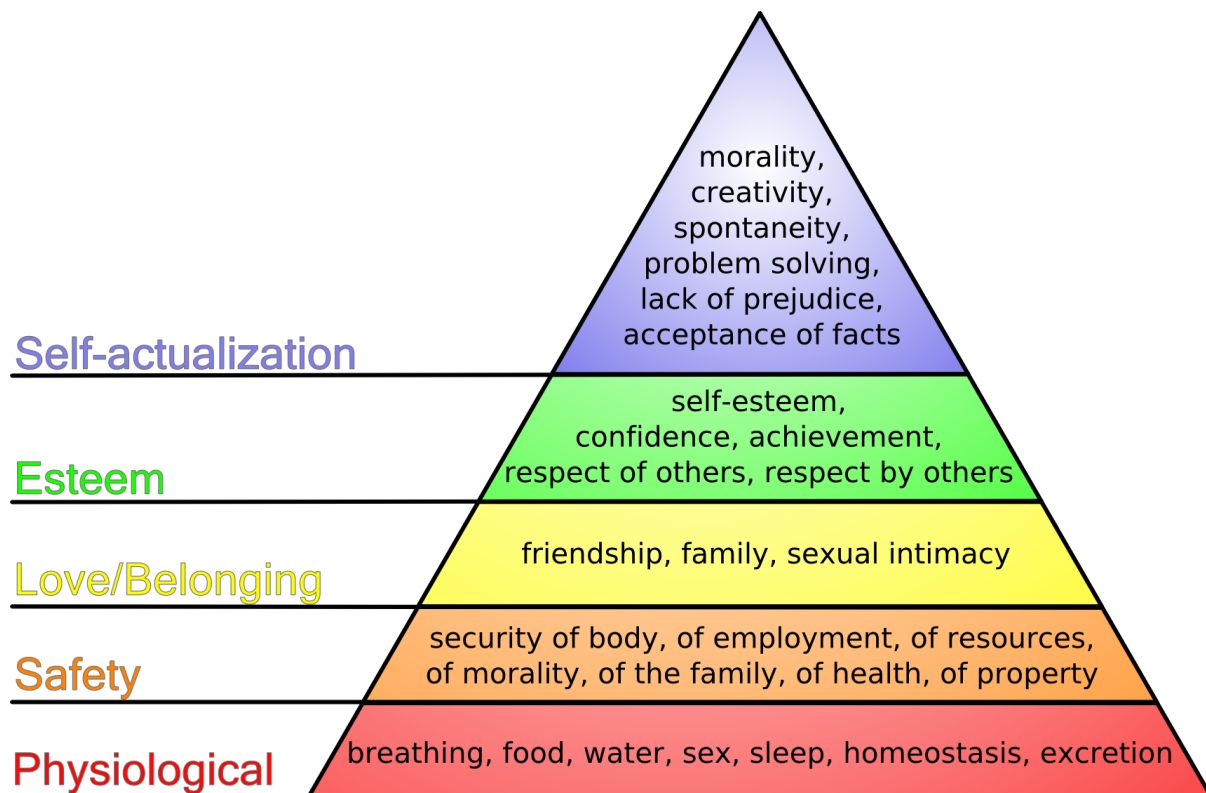
The problem with bonds between child and practitioner can be finding the right childcare to make this a priority, some childcare providers fall short on this, busy childcare facilities often lack the personal touch for a child and this can often mean that although they are assigned a keyworker as part of protocol and regulations, often it will not be that person caring for the child, or the keyworker will have limited time to spend with the child, often the caring will be shared out amongst staff. This can sometimes result in the child finding it hard to settle and adding to their separation anxiety, a high turnover of staff or a lack of time to spend nurturing and building attachments can add to their stress and anxiety levels. It can be a challenge for a early years settings to provide this , more parents are having to return to work due to the cost of living crisis and one of just many challenges that covid has left behind , resulting in more people relying on practitioners to provide the best care they can for there little ones, however being able to spend time interacting with the children on a one to one basis when providing care is extremely important, just talking to them and making them feel like they are not just part of a conveyor belt process will go a long way to getting to know that child as was said in O'Brien M, Lynch H (2011) *Cited in Exploring the role of touch in the first year of life: Mothers ' perspective of tactile interactions with their infants*. If they can form a bond, within a small group of children time can be spent observing the child and their Interests can be identified, from the youngest new-born to a child approaching their second birthday, they all have their individual needs, likes and dislikes and by a professional practitioner having the time to be reflective and observe, close bonds and trust can form as is said in a study by Peek L and Fothergill (2009) *Cited in Using focus groups: lessons from studying day care centres* ,Small focused based groups are more beneficial whatever the age of the child more so if they are in need of extra support dealing with family problems bereavement, splitting of a family or divorce, abuse, substance abuse or exposure to domestic violence .More help and holistic care will always be more beneficial when the time and energy can be invested. As is said in the Curriculum for funded non maintained nursery settings cited by *Welsh Government* it is the job of a practitioner to provide exceptional care and support ,a child that comes to a setting very stressed and upset should be provided with the best possible nurturing environment for them.

Partnerships



It is said that a good childcare facility will welcome the family whenever they wish, and provide them with the help and support needed, this could mean pointing them in the right direction of support with other professionals. Having time for these families to sit and discuss their concerns is very important and can help parents with their stress levels and anxiety as we know this is better for all concerned. As is said by Draper L, Duffy B (2012) Cited in Working with children in the early years.

Babies sense



As was said by J Bowlby babies make associations with facial expressions, having time to read our expressions is very important for their development, and the regulation of their feelings they can from a very young age make associations with our facial expressions and our reactions to how we feel about them. This being the reason that parents who are unable to regulate their feelings, or feel joy or happiness due to personal reason can be hard for the child to bond with or they can be left feeling detached and not worthy of their parents joy , the child can feel they have to look after the parent and not be able to fully enjoy being a child themselves as was shown in a study by Vamos J (2015) cited in free to move free to be , the study involved a very young baby of just 5 months, and how he had been affected by his mother's upset and feelings, it showed how uptight and unable to relax and explore his surroundings he had become, a visit with a professional that spoke to him and mum, visibly calming mum and enabling her to talk through her problems set the child free enabling him to play on the carpet and concentrate on his own development. Another situation could be if the parents feels anger or jealousy towards the child, this can have a lasting affect leaving them full of anxiety lack confidence in themselves even perceive everyone to be the same way and expecting everyone to treat them in this way, these are the occasions in which secondary attachments with other family members, or an exceptional key worker in a childcare setting will be ready to show them love and meet their needs. As was said by J Bowlby babies often make associations with smells, touch or sounds and a baby could associate the sound of its secondary attachments voice or smell with the much-needed cuddles and love they need.

Support



Some might say more Support for the families struggling is required within Wales help is available to the families that have children aged 3 years until school age in the form of flying start who offer free childcare support for families who need it also available is childcare vouchers which some childcare facilities accept, poverty or struggling with finances can leave a family feel unable to cope, leaving them feel less able to focus on the bonding process or on supporting a child's development, however this can be the case with children from the time of birth, leaving a 3 year gap until the help becomes available, however studies do show that Wales are still ahead of some other countries as is said in Cleveland G, Colley S (2013) *cited in Integration of childcare and education in Canada: A comparison with Sweden, New Zealand, England and Wales*. Wales is inline with the other countries for providing accessible early care and education, with Canada being the country behind in this area.

Rights of children



As officials have become more aware over the years of the importance of the early years sector, lots of trials have been carried out and new frameworks and procedures have been introduced one of which is Birth to three matters by (DFES, 2002), this was published to guide all the exceptional practitioners in the right direction to enable them to give the babies in their care the best start in life possible, to provide all the professional love and care they need when it is needed. All professionals working with children and the families of children have the UNCRC and the specifications within it at the forefront of their mind as is said in the UNRC (1989) Cited in *Convention on the rights of children* all children have the right to live happy and healthy lives free from worry harm and poverty, there are 45 articles which go in depth as to how this should be achieved for the child. It says how parents, professionals working with the child and the government should all do everything within their power to ensure this happens. Unfortunately, daily life struggles can mean that for whatever reason this doesn't happen, so extra support and love for the children not receiving it at home would be of benefit, the articles are intended to explain to the practitioner the importance of balance between care and education and to show them how to be reflective and honest within their work. To explain the importance of a holistic approach including trying to form the best relationship possible with parents. Another policy recently come out which has all the values of the birth to 3 matters, is the new curriculum for Wales (2022) cited by the Welsh government. This new mandatory curriculum was brought in from the age of 3 years plus, however when reading through the policies within you quickly see that they would benefit children from birth, everything within it if implemented would benefit a child as they grow and their education experiences become more vast, it can be adapted for different age ranges, for instance it emphasises the benefits of allowing outdoor play and exploration, within the safety of a watching adult, this can benefit even the youngest of babies tummy time on a mat outside, or being laid directly on the grass so they are able to feel the texture, or lying to their back to see the leaves rustling in the wind and the birds flying. Visible exploration would be at a minimum at first, progressively more as the child grows and becomes more confident and mobile however the benefits would be felt by the child from day one, it's a big wide world to them and only by having these experiences will it start to make them curious.

Lesson learnt through play and experiencing different cultures.





<https://sway.office.com/XSx5AyXAiF8BjT0O#content=PdDIWj5NnD3O8n>

Within the curriculum it says use of the Welsh language and different cultures is essential, being surrounded by not only the different languages but traditions within different cultures. The younger babies are shown by example that everyone is unique and that the world is made up of lots of people different in many ways to themselves and their families. A good childcare facility provides opportunities to see the diverse cultures and make sure that all children are felt included and accepted and equally as loved and cared for as each other, this is also a part of the new curriculum (2022) *cited by the Welsh government* and one of the rights of children set out within the UNCRC (1989) *as cited in the convention on the rights of children*. Another policy within the new curriculum (2022) *cited by the Welsh government* is how important play and early education based on play is to the child, play influences everything in the early years from the building of their confidence to how they become aware of their surroundings, what is considered acceptable within society and how they find their own interests, passions and develop their own personality, this is achieved by experimenting with play and by observing others play. Education and learning start with play, with visual multi-sensory toys and activities, treasure baskets made up of lots of everyday items, messy play consisting of lots of different textures can develop imagination and curiosity. Grasp reflexes and visual stimulation all develop in the early days from being provided with aids to support this as is said by Forbes R (2004) *cited in beginning play*.

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