



The First 1000 Days

Introduction

The first 1000 days is classed as from the time of conception to the child's second birthday. The first 1000 days is seen to be some of the most influential times of development which care givers and practitioners play a big part in. (NCT.org, 2013) During the time of the first 1000 days this is the time where a child goes through a period of rapid development such as physically, emotionally and socially. (NCT. Org, 2013). The first 1000 days is important as when babies are born their brains are only 25% developed, however by 22 months the rapid development of the brain has increased to 80%. (NCT. Org, 2013).

My aim in this assignment is to discuss the first 1000 days, attachment, professional roles, effective communication, current approaches, Holistic Care, activities to do with babies, Suitable environments and theorists.

The Importance of the first 1000 days

The first 1000 days is classed as from the time of conception to the child's second birthday. The first 1000 days is seen to be some of the most influential times of development which care givers and practitioners play a big part in. (NCT.org, 2013). As previously stated the first 1000 days is from the moment of conception, this demonstrates the idea that 'The mother's quality of life is shared with the foetus, but this is not just about her physical state, the foetus also shares her mental state.' (Gerhardt, 2014).

After birth it is essential that the bond between the primary care givers and the child is formed this is done in many ways, one of these ways is skin to skin contact with the mother and father. skin to skin contact allows the mother to initiate breastfeeding and develop the relationship with the baby. skin to skin contact also allows the baby to adjust to life outside of the womb and feel safe. (UNICEF, ND)

The first 1000 days is also important as this is where the child's brain first begins to develop. During the first 1000 days the brain begins to form connections between neurons and these become stronger and extensive, these connections therefore form a child's development. (Save the children, 2016).

The first 1000 days are also important as it allows practitioners and parents to understand the needs of individuals this can then be displayed on Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as in order to achieve self actualisation the individual must have all their needs met.

Attachment

attachments are important emotional bonds that children develop with their primary care giver and other early years practitioners. Emotional attachments allows the child to feel safe and secure in an early years environment, they feel more inclined to express the way they feel and aids development and further relationships. (Early years matters, 2022).

The Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby, (1969), this was the idea of infants staying close to their primary care giver also seen as the attachment figure. there are various emotions that were suggested that shows attachment to a primary care giver these can be crying, following and clinging. (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970).

There are also more bonds of attachment that form in the first 1000 days, these are with secondary care givers these are people which the children develop close relationships with. (Bowlby, 1969)

Bowlby (1969) suggests there are four stages to attachment that a child will develop during the first 1000 days and beyond, He suggested that the first three stages typically are displayed within the first 100 days these are pre- attachment, Attachment in the making and clear cut attachment. Bowlby suggested that the way these experiences were had by a child developed their self-worth.

Professional Love

professional love is a term developed and researched by DR. Jools Page *et al*, 2016 to understand the intimacies within early years care settings, and how difficult it can be to display emotions due to safeguarding. In order to develop her understanding of practitioners thoughts of professional love in the work place Page, 2016 conducted a survey, the results displayed that 95% of professionals feel that showing affection is important in early years settings, however, only 89% felt they knew what was acceptable to show to children. (PACEY, 2016) and (University of Sheffield, 2016). Professional love also aids a child's development, emotionally, understanding and allows them to feel safe and secure as they feel they are able to open up to their care givers. (Early years matters, 2020).

Professional Roles

Primary care giver

During the first 1000 days the primary care giver plays a crucial part in the child's outcome. Early years practitioners have a job to understand and recognise a parents commitment and to early years development and education and make sure they make working with parents a priority. (Birth to 5 matters, ND).

Working with parents and multi-agency.

It is important that early years practitioners work along side the parents as this ensures a good understanding of a child's needs and ways that they can ensure that development continues outside of the early years setting into the home.

Dunlop, 2022 suggests that research shows that young people achieve more and are happier when early years practitioners work closely with parents, this can be in ways such as sharing observations and gathering ideas on how to promote development, this works in early years settings as it promotes learning and assist's them in their stage of rapid development.

Hilton *et al*, 2002 suggested the helper model is where the practitioner and parents work together to collaborate and share ideas on ways to ensure development is promoted. Hilton *et al*, 2002 developed the latter model which displayed a good example of effective partnership working between parents and practitioners which was developed upon, exploration, clarification, setting goals, planning action, implementation and Review. these steps allow communication to succeed without these steps communication would fail.

A strong communicative relationship between early years practitioners and parents allows the child's holistic development to grow, as this allows not just one aspect of the child to develop but all aspects.

Benoit (1997) *et al* emphasised the importance of interactions between children and their care givers such as parents and early years professionals for the child's emotional, social and learning wellbeing.

Stern (1985) Suggests that parents and child care professionals compose biographies for children and these therefore affect the development of the child

Enabling Adults

The role of the is very significant in the first 1000 days, the adult is the person who 'sets the expectation for learning by creating emotionally safe environments that support learners to begin to express and regulate their feelings and behaviours in positive ways.' (Welsh Government, 2021).

The enabling adult has many characteristics, they are consistent care givers, they model emotions such as kindness and compassion, they assist learners to cope with emotions of uncertainty, change and help to manage transitions and changes that may happen to daily routines. (Welsh Government, 2021)

The adults learn to deepen their understanding of the learners needs, in order to do this the adults must observe, notice and respond to the sensitivity of learners. The adults make decision on when and how they should support learners in a constructive way, this will then allow them to encourage

and support learners to begin to work together and solve problems with the children.(Welsh Government, 2021).

Enabling adults allow learners to recognise other learners thoughts and feelings and they can be different to theirs. they allow the learner to have a voice and make decisions by responding to their likes and dislikes this allows them to display their likes and dislikes. Adults are responsive and therefore interpret the child's communication through actions, words and behaviours, and responding sensitively to support understanding, communication allows to develop the learners confidence in communicating with others and valuing their ideas and feelings, this allows them to understand that communicating is different for ever individual as it meets their individual needs. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Enabling adults within the early years settings need to create an environment that is communication rich, the environment should provide understanding through interactions which then expands the learners knowledge this then allows them to make connections with people and places. They support learners through skilful interactions and expanding on their existing knowledge, by doing this adults make an effective broad and balanced curriculum, as this allows them to maintain quality provisions and making adoptions to meet the individual needs of all learners. (Welsh Government, 2021).

It is the job of the enabling adult to create a joyful approach to learning, this allows learners to develop resilience, independence and confidence as it encourages them to take on tasks and challenges where they may have to take risks. (Welsh government, 2021).

Enabling Experiences

Experiences include the choices made by the individual and can be found from the interests of the child or local interests. Experiences should be made to assist the holistic development of a child. (Welsh Government, 2021)

Enabling experiences is important during the first 1000 days as experiences should promote a learners independence, in order to achieve this learners should be provided with opportunities for involvement and uninterrupted active learning on situation that can be found in real life situations. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Enabling experiences also allows the support for learners to develop their social and communication skills. this allows them to experience time to recognise their feeling and recognise other peoples feelings., therefore the early years practitioner should make sure these experiences are planned carefully to develop the child's communication. This can be developed in different environments both indoor and outdoors. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Learners should be provided with the opportunities to partake in practical experiences such as mathematical and digital technology, as this will aid their cognitive development. it is also essential that they take part in experiences that promote enjoyment in physical activity. These physical activities should be both indoor and outdoor and should be conducted using a range of resources and tools that allows them to take control. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Experiences such as these allow the learners to develop an awareness of their own bodies and skills such as co-ordination, core strength and balance. they also learn to develop their fine and gross

motor skills. These experiences allow them to think about the risks, think and plan their movements and assess the risks of the actions that they make. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Multi-sensory experiences should also be provided as this allows children to communicate and express themselves creatively. This then encourages children to develop their creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Enabling Environments

The environment in which the children develop plays an important role in their development.

The environment can be indoors and outdoors and should be centred around the experiences and the child's needs, the children should be allowed to explore the environment as this drives their development and allows them to feel a sense of belonging in the environment they are in, therefore the experience should be child led. (Welsh Government, (2021).

When thinking about the environments it is important that practitioners in the early years settings consider not just physical spaces but also the emotional aspects of the environment that aids a learner to achieve their potential. These environments allow a range of activities and experiences, this then allows the infant to express themselves physically, imaginatively and creatively. This then allows them to be independent and follow their interests or work with others with their interests. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Environments should ensure that they value the diversity that is within and therefore should demonstrate the inclusiveness of the environment. In order to do this communication should be a key focus and the environment should focus on promoting emerging communication skills and developing them further. this can be done by the facility having a wide range of resources to facilitate the development of communication. (Welsh Government, 2021).

The environment should also ensure that they provide time and space for contemplation and reflection. This should also coincide with the development of fine and gross motor skills as these are essential for the child to develop in their first 1000 days as they are developing physically. (Welsh Government, 2021).

The environment should also be flexible and contain variety. this allows them to offer the children risks and challenges. This then aids the learners to develop resilience, confidence and independence. These environments allow children to express themselves and develop throughout their first 1000 days.

The Outdoor Environment

The Outdoor environment is important for the development during the first 1000 days as it allows social, emotional, spiritual and physical development, it also allows a well maintained well being. (Welsh Government, 2021). The Welsh Government suggests that the outdoors should be where most of the learning in early years settings takes place. They believe the outdoors allows learners to feel relaxed and stimulated in their development, the outdoors also allows them to use different senses to learn in different ways compared to indoors as there are different smells, sounds and textures.

The outdoor environment is a good way to ensure that learners enhance their skills, however in order to maximise the outdoor learning, learners must have an enabling adult that is able to understand the value of learning outside as it enhances development in the first 1000 days. Being able to learn in the outdoors also allows children to understand the environment and their surroundings.

Finally, as suggested by the Welsh Government, 2021 the outdoors allows the learners their own opportunities to develop their co-ordination and their fine and gross motor skills as it allows them to explore what they can do physically. The outdoors allows them to take risks and experience things that they would not be able to experience inside of the classroom in an indoor environment, as they can assess the risks of their action as they have different consequences outdoors and develop resilience and confidence, the outdoor environment should be varied and diverse to allow opportunities to develop many different skills, this allows them to develop imagination, creativity and curiosity in the outdoor environment.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is not just about relaying information between people but making sure you have an understanding of more than the information but other ways of communicating such as the emotions behind communication. In order to effectively communicate you also need to be able to listen to other people so that they feel that they are being valued and their information is important and understood. (Help guide, 2020).

Effective communication in Early years settings in the first 1000 days is essential as there is more than two people communicating. The ability to effectively communicate within an early years is vital as it allows practitioners to develop relationships with the children, other practitioners and parents attending their settings. (Early learning HQ, 2012)

In order to ensure that the environment communicates effectively practitioner should ensure that they conduct many things to ensure effective communication a few of these aspects include, giving full attention this can be done by the use of eye contact, Being aware of body language, Listen, Monitor the environment and look out for aspects that could affect communication, adapt to the needs of an individual and be confident. (Early learning HQ, (2012)

Holistic Development

Holistic Development refers to the development of the whole child, therefore this includes the physical, Intellectual, Emotional, social and Spiritual. These factors of development can be affected by the relationships and the environments that the children are in. (Mcilroy, 2021)

Mcilroy, 2021 suggests that all aspects of development must have attention, to ensure the holistic development is met it is important to develop skills such as Compassion, Social Ability, fine and gross motor skills coordination and creativity. Mcilroy, 2021, further explained the five key aspects of holistic development and how they allow a child to lead a healthy and happy life.

In order to encourage Holistic there needs to be a balance between the environment and the child. therefore it is important to understand all aspects of Holistic development such as understanding the physical milestones that happen in the first 1000 days. Physical milestones also include the motor skills that should be developed and the importance of them. Social Skills can be developed in

the first 1000 days as they are in early years settings therefore will be interacting with children and practitioners and will need to share and practice going out and doing activities in groups. Mcilroy, 2021 suggests that emotional development allows them to create awareness of others emotions, share experiences and become aware of peoples needs. Mcilroy, 2021 also suggests that Intellectual development is developing cognitive skills and a way to do this is to allow free play at home and in early years settings. parents can also aid intellectual development at home as they can read a bedtime story to their children before bed.

Skin to skin contact also aids holistic development as it helps the baby develop better physically and allows better developmental outcomes.

Current Approaches

There are many current approaches that happen within the first 1000 days that are suggested by the Welsh Government, these approaches aid development these can be experiences such as a range of stories, poems, songs and rhymes. (Welsh Government, 2021).

Mclroy, 2021 suggests that practitioner's and parents should take time to look at the fine motor skills that should be developed these can be done by undertaking activities that can aid the development of fine motor skills these can be activities such as holding crayons or pencils, playing with playdough, playing with sand or building blocks as they are using their fingers to do activities.

There are many activities that can be done with children during their first 1000 days in order for them to develop and learn, these activities aid their holistic development. as suggested by Golinkoff, ND these activities include playing in sand. Sand allows them to develop their self confidence and physical development and coordination. Playing in sand can be done with a class mate this then allows them to work on their team working and communication skills. Similarly, Golinkoff, ND also suggested that water play aids a child's development in similar ways to sand play.

Play Dough is also another way to aid a child's development as this allows them to develop their fine motor skills, allows them to be creative and also hand-eye co-ordination. Play Dough also allows them to use their imagination when creating their art work, similarly, dress up and role play allows them to become creative and use their imagination and work with others so allows confidence to build and social skills. Playing with dolls can also have the same affect as they use their imagination and expressions.

Furthermore, painting and drawing also has similar effects as they develop fine motor skills and their imagination it can also be a way of communicating non-verbally.

There are also many more different activities that can be done with children in their first 1000 days to aid development within the early years settings these can be things such as music, rhyming, Dancing and singing. (Golinkoff, ND).

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