



The First **1000** Days

What do we mean by the first 1000 **days**?

*The first 1000 days of a child's life refer to the conception up to their second birthday, these days are very **vital** for children's holistic development. The first 1000 days are important for both parent and child, post and prenatal care are crucial have long lasting impact on the mother and child.*

Parents, Guardians and Practitioners view the first 1000 days as 'the foundation' phrase of life. 'A house is only as strong as its foundation' with proper nature and nurture a child has the potential of a bright and prosperous future, where anything is possible.

The first 1,000 days of existence have a large impact on a child's holistic development. In the early days, a baby's genes interact with the environment to determine what kind of brain is needed for the rest of their life. Bronfenbrenner strongly suggested During the first 1000 days of a child's life nurture, nature and education are core aspects.



1 - Mr. Wallis explains the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life, and the fact that our brain development is not only dependent on our genes but how our genes interact with our environment. He stated that a child's brain grows and

develop with every interaction from that of close friends and family. During this time interactions and making bonds are a definite way ensure that have a secure attachment and have the ability to form quality relationships in later life.

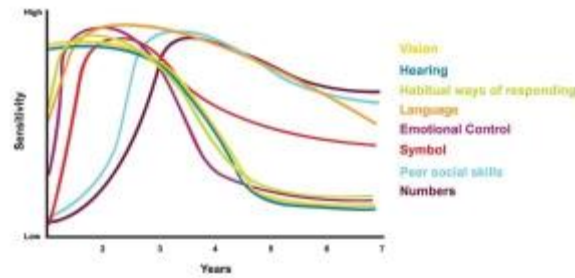
why is the first 1000 days *important*?



This is where a child starts their developmental processes, the foundation for the rest of their life. Education and Care have a huge impact on a child's holistic development. A baby's brain in the first 1000 days develops more quickly during this time than another period throughout their life. The way the brain moulds and adapts to its environment contributes to the sort of person the baby will grow into, through proper care and education. The first years of life are a critical opportunity for building healthy, resilient, and academically competent children, young people, and adults (Burton, 2015)

All areas of learning and development are intricately intertwined, young children develop and learn holistically, and their emotional and social development seems to form the bedrock of other areas. (David et al., 2003). Due to the fact children in this are not able to learn by themselves and care for themselves, adults are used to facilitators.

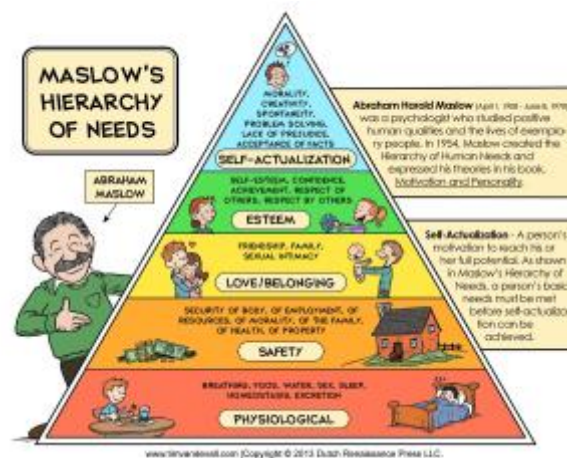
Montessori viewed the first years of life as having remarkable potential in terms of developmental progress due to the child's unconscious absorbent mind, which allowed them to obtain and make sense of the environment around, which in fact assists in shaping their personalities (Aubrey and Riley, 2019:27)



2 - The graph in left hand corner develop by The Council for early child development referenced Nash 1997 early years study, 1999 :Shonkoff; 2000 demonstrates children's sensitivity to vision , language and other areas are at there peek at the age of two years.



3 - Sergio Pecorelli stressed that the first 1000 days accounts for approximately for seventy percentage (70%) of our future health and wellbeing, so in hindsight the first 1000 days are to children what water and air are to our bodies.



4 - THE NEEDS OF A CHILD

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs there are several needs that must be for overall holistic development to occur, these needs are :healthy food , loving relationship , safety and security ,time to play and a healthy environment.

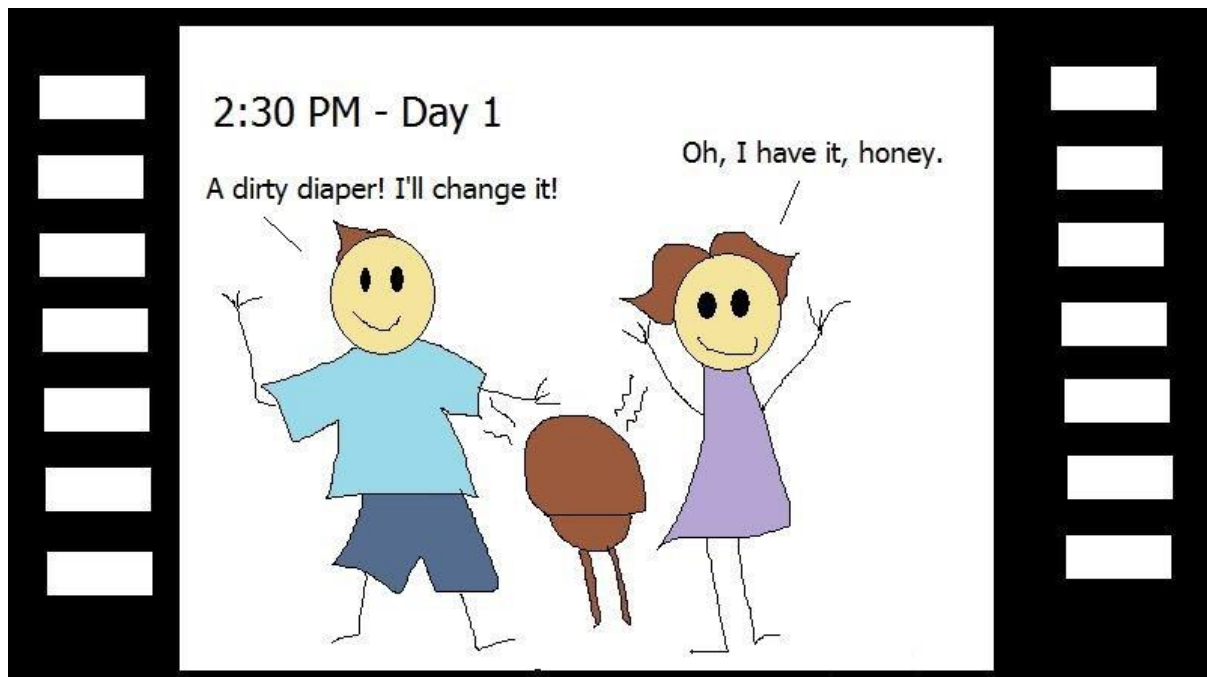
The right diet (nutrition) during pregnancy and care in early childhood will help a baby's learning, physical skills and emotions to develop properly. Studies show that food gives us energy, ninety seven percent (97%) of a child's energy goes towards brain development, therefore they need proper food. They also can not be stressed or exposed to an unsafe environment.

It is essential for a child's development to have loving and secure relationships. Babies learn logic, communication ,emotions and behaviour through their relationships. As a result of their relationship, they develop a sense of what the world is like and how they adapt into society.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) each child has the right for their basic needs to be met and for their human rights to be recognized in addition for them to be protected from harm. Article 6 states 'all children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily' this does not mean that children should just exist however they should be properly cared for in and out of the womb, provided with all the essentials for proper growth and holistic development by their parents with the assistance of the government. Article 24 states 'children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they can stay healthy.' In agreement with Maslow's hierarchy of needs children have the right to physiological needs stated as provided in the article, these needs can be categorized as basic needs with a vital for their cognitive development.

If the needs of children are not met successfully in the first 1000 days, this may have a negative impact on their later life. John Morreau stressed that upon reflection on the many youth suicide cases in New Zealand, study notes indicate that the needs in those first 1000 days were not met.

Role of Adults



The role for all enabling adults is to ensure that all their needs are met.

The moment you realize you are pregnant your role as a mother begins, which is the most key role one can play in a child's life and development. Research shows that a pregnant mother's health, nutrition, and stress levels can have an effect on the future of her baby. After the baby is born, their own physical environment, nutrition and relationships can have a life long impact on their health and well being.

It is with mothers that babies first experience safety, love, and form attachments. Erikson's first stage of psychosocial development, which takes place in a baby's first year of life, is trust vs mistrust. It is the responsibility of both parents; however, some may say it is the sole responsibility of the mother to make that there is successful in this stage so they can go on to have secure attachments. The pleasure of warmth and cuddling when a baby is being fed is as essential an

ingredient for emotional development as the nutritious meal is for physical development. Erikson made it clear that a huge piece of accomplishing this first stage of development is the quality of parent-child relationships, babies need as much warm, loving contact with their parents as they can get. His theory states that babies will develop the strongest sense of security attachment if they know that adults will come running when they cry. By meeting their needs quickly and consistently throughout their first year of life teachers are doing the opposite of spoiling.



5 - importance of proper care for both mother and child. The growth and development of the baby can be adversely affected if a woman is stressed during pregnancy. Diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease can occur as result of this type of lifestyle.

According to Piaget this stage of cognitive development is classified as sensorimotor, this is where they learn through their senses, reflexes and manipulate materials. He believed that in the beginning babies' reactions to the world are purely reflexive, that intelligence began when reactions became purposeful. Piaget also stressed the importance of play as an important avenue for learning.

Enabling environment



An enabling environment is a rich and varied space where risks are minimized and professionally managed, and children are protected from harm and abuse.

An enabling environment plays a key role in supporting children's learning and development across all seven areas of the EYFS. It is well recognized that children learn and develop best in caring, supportive environments which respond to their individual needs. An enabling environment ensures that children grow and develop to be 'resilient, capable, confident and self-assured'.

The environment in which a child plays and learns has always been a crucial factor to consider when thinking about children's development, and much research takes place around this very subject. Giving children the physical and mental space in which to enable learning in a safe environment is key to their growth.

To ensure that the environment is enabling Childcare practitioners can apply these steps :

- Create an environment that is warm, welcoming, and nurturing and facilitates a sense of belonging.
- Offer a range of resources, which are familiar to babies, as well as activities that are new to them
- Ensure that the activities and environment offer room for outdoor and indoor play, sufficient space for children to move and collaborate, and encourage exploration and risk-taking and well monitored.
- Provide a range of activities which serve different purposes: inspire imagination and role play, exploration of personal relationships and feelings, problem solving, quiet time and reflection. Consider having a construction area, home corner, various toys and books, storytelling times, music, and art
- Ensure the activities and environment meet the needs of all the children who attend, from young babies.

Montessori believed that children learn best in a prepared environment, and it should be child centered. She also believed those children learnt language and other significant life skills, without conscious effort from them spend their time. For that reason, she thought that the environment for children need to be beautiful and orderly so that children can learn, they learn best through best through sensory experience. An environment should be structured in a particular way that children were able to choose their own activities using resources which scaffolded their learning this would aid children in developing self control and self respect and give them a sense of responsibility whilst providing a sense of freedom.

Bronfenbrenner strongly believed that the developing child should be studied within their own environment because it is through these environments the child truly develops a sense of self. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977) ecological systems theory, a child interacts with five ecological systems during their life, which sees the child at the centre. The microsystem has the greatest impact on a child's life, this is environment is the closest one in their life these environments include school and home which facilitates interactions with friends, family, neighbour and peers. who can be seen as persons who directly influence the social interaction within the child's range. Within each system the child's developmental progress may change due to the interaction with internal and external factors.

An enabling environment refers to both indoor and outdoor spaces, which play a key role in educating children. The field of environmental psychology has established that the environment has strong influence on behavioural action, mood, feelings and experience (Prescott 2008 quoted in Maynard .T and Waters.J,2014:30). A good outdoor environment should be physically diverse, for being whole-bodied and fully physical. Secondly the environment generous for enquiry, discovery and thinking. The variety of materials along with resources available to young children in the outdoor space, incorporation with the ways they supported to make use of them can significantly impact the nature of their experiences. Lastly supportive for feeling nurtured, calm and imaginative. Young children can change energy levels rapidly, experiencing sudden need for withdrawal, reset and recovery. The provision of suitable environmental features and qualities to support withdrawal, downtime and restoration should be considered as critical aspect of a good outdoor environment.



6 - Enabling environments provide children with opportunity to develop and build their social skills, for it is through social interaction they learn best .



7 - This picture illustrates an example of Montessori prepared environment, it is design to allow children take control of their individual learning through centrally resourced materials that were accessible to children at all times, also she stressed the importance of having child size furniture and tools for this would allow children to work or play without interference from adults and asking for assistance, which will result in them feeling confident and developing their problem solving skills



8 - EYFS Framework states that children learn and develop well in enabling environments

Enabling experiences



Vygotsky stated that children learn through play, social interaction and experiences. Giving children a wide range of experiences has a vital influence on their overall development. Play contributes to majority of children experiences in life. Relationships are the most important and valuable experience children can have, it tends to have a particular on their emotional and social functioning.

Interaction of parents with their children are critical experience ,that literally changes the brain. A baby's level of care can increase or decrease the number of connections in the brain by up to

twenty-five percent (25%), the more connections in the brain the greater the brain's ability to process information and to learn.

We know from neuroscientists that children's brains are hungry for stimulation. Indeed, this is the case throughout our lives. What we touch, taste and see and what we talk about create a myriad of connections in our ever-changing brains. The term 'neuroplasticity' is used to describe the way that the brain is flexible, especially in early childhood. While the firing of neurons in response to stimulation is not visible, it is easy enough to see the effects of stimulation on children's development in more tangible ways.

First, children who have had a wide range of experiences tend to have a lot to say. This is because if there is an adult on hand or another child, it is normal for children to want to communicate to others about what they are doing and seeing. This is because communication and language are in their earliest phase as a social and emotional activity – a joining together of a shared experience.

To see how a child's brain develops through experiences, click the link below.

[click link](#)

[how the brain develops through experiences](#)



9 - Simple experiences such as playing in the rain exposes them to the weather, nature and science



10 - Although she may be having fun she is also learning about colours and shape.

Conclusion



In summary practitioners, parents and childcare professionals view the first 1000 days as the foundation for the rest of their life. It can have a great impact on their future, they also benefit from play, experience ,their environment and successfully meeting their needs during those first 1000 days .

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