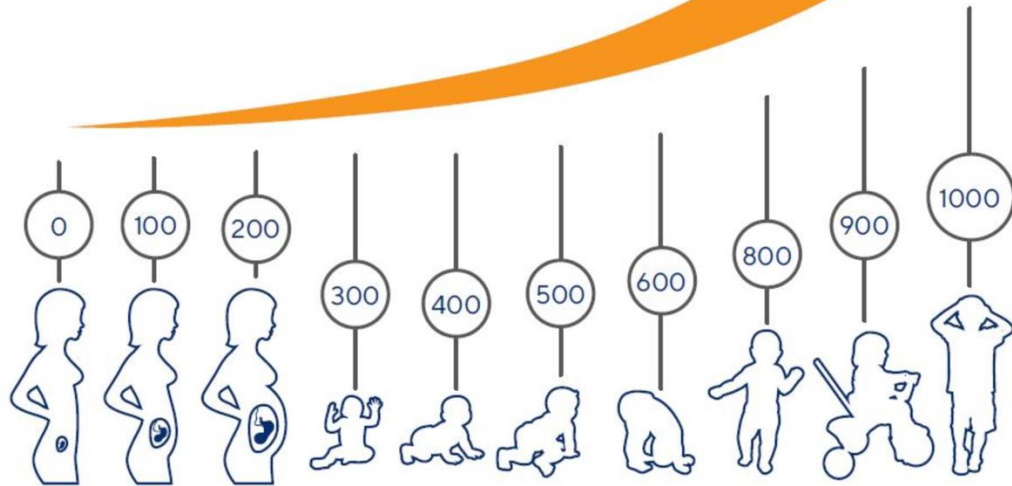


# First 1000 Days



(Ausnutria Nutrition Institute, No Date)

## The First 1,000 Days

By Lucie Williams

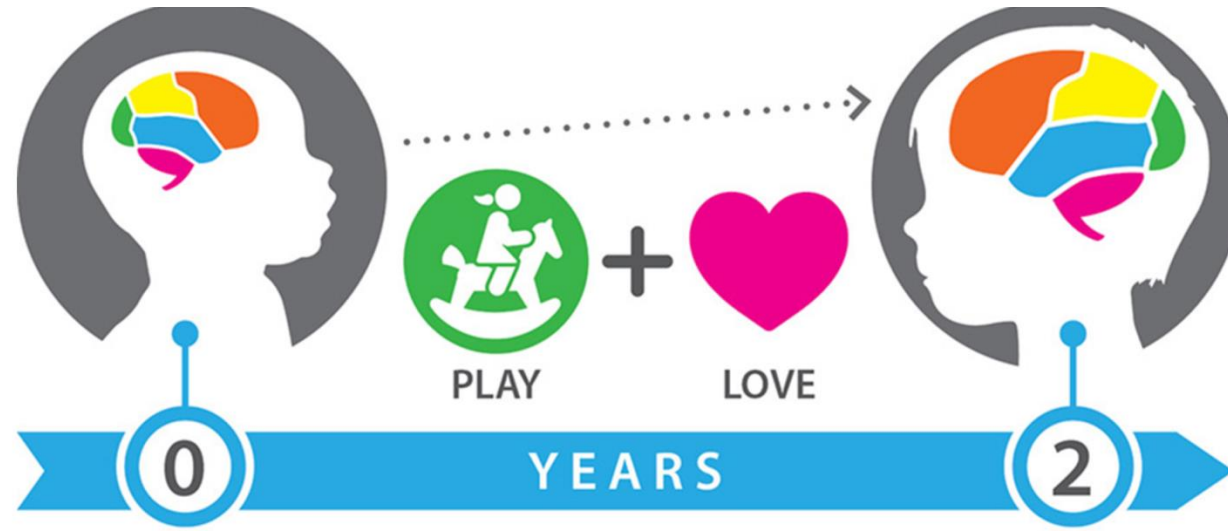
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I confirm I have not used AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment.

# What is the First 1,000 Days?

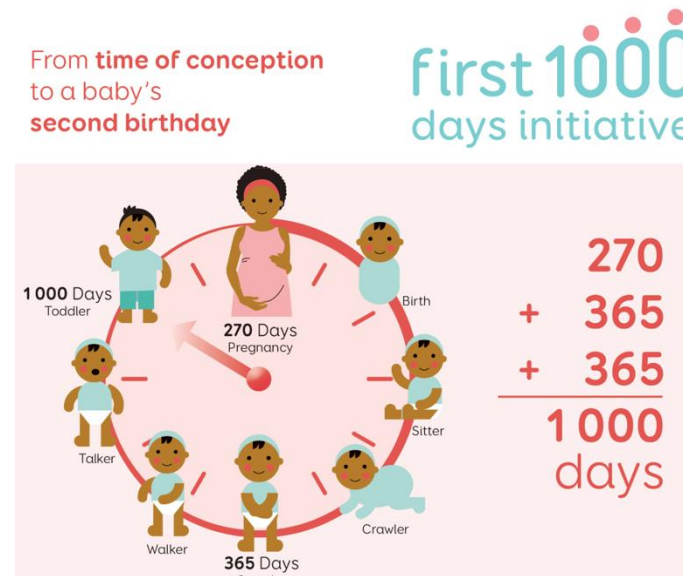


(Nanny 'n Me, 2019)

- The USAID (2015) states the first 1000 days refers to the crucial time in a child's life from conception to age two. These first 1000 days will begin to shape the child as they grow and develop. The child's physical health, immune health and their brain development will all play a part in this time as the way they are treated will determine the long-term effects for their future. Pregnancy is a vital time for a mother and baby as the baby is also affected by the choices the mother will make. Nutrition and stress levels will directly impact the child in the moment but also long term, such as after birth they may have issues with their health or their wellbeing based on their nutrition, physical development or the relationships exposed to them (Australian Government 2024).

# Why are the first 1,000 days Important?

- ▶ The first 1000 days are important because if children are disadvantaged from conception this is considered to have a huge impact on their future. The habits of mothers smoking or drinking while pregnant are a huge factor into the development of the foetus, however increased stress can also be a major factor into the lack of development during pregnancy (Lorraine Jenkin, No date)
- ▶ According to Finnegan (2020) during pregnancy there are a range of vaccines available for pregnant women. These vaccines are recommended for mothers as they can help mothers avoid becoming unwell but avoiding the stress of needing hospitalisation due to illness. Another positive the vaccinations will help the mother but also the unborn foetus as the vaccine will carry through the mother to the child helping them with their first few weeks outside of utero.
- ▶ Nutrition and growth throughout pregnancy and up to the age of two are major contributors to a child's physical development but overall development to. If the mother isn't providing enough nutrients in the foods, she eats the foetus therefore will not receive them either. A lack of nutrients can severely affect the foetus as brain function or development will be stunted, a factor could be due to poverty, stress or sickness which then deprives the mother from obtaining the right supplements to support a healthy pregnancy and foetus (Sarah, E 2016)



(UFS, No Date)

# Caregiving

(Näslund-Hadley, 2023)



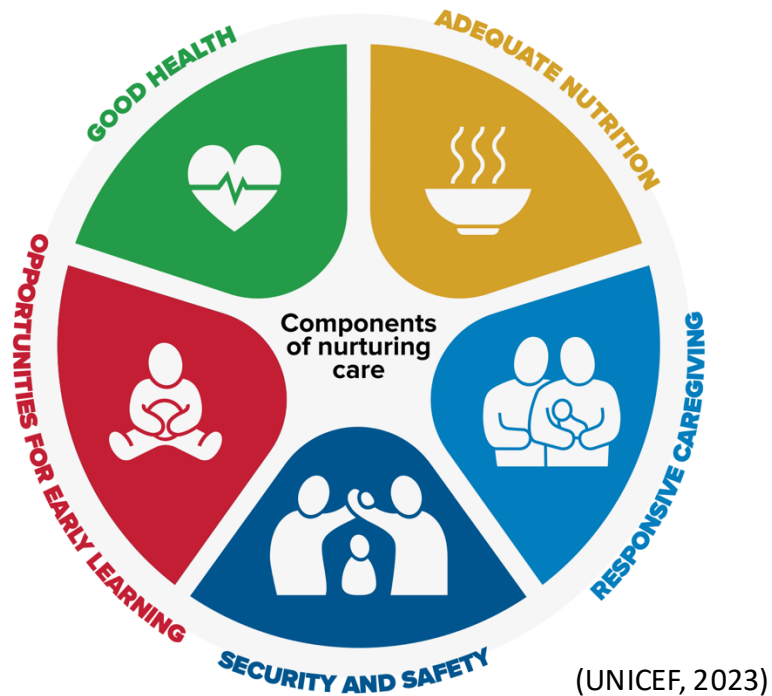
# What is exceptional Care?

Exceptional caregiving includes building a strong foundation for the development and health for children, making sure they have access to various resources to widen their experiences and help to continuously develop and reach their milestones. Exceptional care for a lot of a child's life will be given by the adults around, mainly being parents and family. Children may attend nurseries where staff should have an understand the first 1,000 days. Within a nursery setting, staff will encourage outdoor play that helps a child receive fresh air and exercise but also encourage healthy choices of food, so they receive the best nutrients to support their physical and immune development. All these experiences added together reflect a healthy and positive attitude supporting a sense of responsibility for their wellbeing. Staff will also be able to have a close relationship with not only the children but the parents as an extension of care to help with wellbeing. Having a close relationship with parents where staff can advocate for parents and their children's needs or give guidance to inform parents about how babies and children can be affected by being surrounded by misuse of substances. Or having direct communication with charities or professionals to advise parents on difficult matters (Jenkin, no date)

According to UNICEF (2023) having direct communication with charities or professionals to advise parents and carers on difficult matters can be a huge support. Children that do not receive nurturing care could impact their future opportunities, not having proper care can lead to having issues with impaired language, difficulty in academics and likely to not finish education.

Some theorists such as Bronfenbrenner suggests that the transition in becoming a father is a milestone for men. Men will also start a journey through pregnancy along with mothers, as there will be a lot of change on the male side. Men will have to make sure that during pregnancy they create a safe and healthy relationship by making changes like to stop smoking so that the child will come into a healthy environment (Kranenburg, 2019).

***Children who do not receive all the elements of nurturing care tend to have impaired cognitive, linguistic and psychosocial skills.***



# Why Exceptional Care Is So Important?



(Public Health Wales, no date)

- Public Health Wales (no date) states exceptional care giving is important because supporting parents in the upbringing of their children will shape children's lives by allowing them to have positive experiences and knowledge to grow and to minimise the impact of negative surrounding and environments as parents can receive as much help before exposing children to these stressors. Parents receiving this support and taking on board the guidance will help to break intergenerational cycles.



(Centre For Autism, 2025)

# Professional Partnerships

# What is the role of an early year's practitioner to support children and families in the first 1000 days?

- ▶ According to the Senedd (2024), they want in place policies and documents that state that children should receive support in the early years and education to support their first 1,000 days.
- ▶ The role of midwives in pregnancy is to support mothers in the first 300 days. Midwives have a huge role to play with parents, they are a major influence on parents as they help them learn and understand not only their pregnancy but the first 1000 days for parents to prepare themselves how to care and give a nurturing environment for a child, Advising parents on nutrition, vaccines and the best outcome for a healthy pregnancy that parents can control for themselves (Penwell 2022).
- ▶ Practitioners can advise support services such as Early Help Hubs that can offer intervention in support with advice and guidance into different local services parents can use in order to prepare and inform themselves with support of agencies to help them along the way (children in Wales, 2021).



(The Welcome Centre, No date)

## The Important of effective partnership working

Birth to 5 years (no date) suggests partnership working is important during the first 1000 days because parents and the wide range of early years practitioners are the main contributors to young children's learning. Working with one another and building trust with one another will benefit the child in the long run as if parents and practitioners work together to ensure that education and learning does not stop after school or once the child has left the childcare building, learning continues at home with the support of educators. This way ensures that children are always learning, developing and adapting new learnt skills but also outlining their needs to show where intervention is needed.

Department of education (2021) states that if within an education setting a child has been observed engaging in lining up toys or favoring a sequence of numbers that this information can be shared with parents to continue this within the home environment to follow along with the child's engagement in positioning and sequence. <sup>9</sup>

# Maternal Factors that could impact Development and what support is available?

| Maternal Factors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Supporting Strategies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stress-</b><br>Glover (2019) conducted a study that during pregnancy if a mother has elevated stress and anxiety levels this leads to many health risks for the child during pregnancy and in the future. There are higher chances of ADHD, an altered brain structure and function and emotional problems due to stress the mother went through during pregnancy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Health hub (2022) suggests to: -<br>Focus on rest and to make sure that sleep is being obtained<br>Eat a balanced diet with plenty of healthy choices with plenty of water but also treats so ensure you are enjoying what you eat and maintain a balance to keep a health and positive wellbeing<br>To let out your emotions and opinions with other mothers in groups to see everyone's experiences<br>To keep in contact with your providers such as midwives and doctors to address any concerns and provide support. |
| <b>Nutrition-</b><br>Parretini (2020) states during pregnancy increasing nutrients in the mother's diet has been proven to increase the unborn child's health in the future. It is studied that obesity and diabetes are on the rise to be major factors into mortality rates in birth and early birth rates increasing. It is discussed that the fetus doesn't rely on the mother's diet but rather will hold to the nutrients stored in the body.<br>Marques (2013) suggests fatty acids during pregnancy have shown an increased rate in asthma and allergies in early childhood. | The NHS (2023) offers the healthy start scheme to receive support in buying food during pregnancy and if you have a child under the age of four. You will receive a Healthy Start card that will help you buy some formulas, fruits and vegetables and some types of milk.<br>There is also access to advice through Get Better Health: Start for Life's pregnancy and baby emails, for advice and tips throughout pregnancy.                                                                                             |

# Challenges

(Business Masterminds, No Date)



# What are the Challenges in Providing High Quality Care?

## Challenges

**Funding** - Funding is a challenge when providing high quality care because due to the rising demand of the funding, support staff are difficult to maintain. Inflation has seen that the NHS and health care services for children and families have taken a major loss. Due to the lack of funding this leaves families and children on longer waiting lists, unlikely to qualify for certain facilities. This is a huge strain on everyone as this leaves the NHS unable to fund new improvements (The Medic Portal, 2025).

**Staffing**- Verrill (No date) states staffing is a challenge when providing high quality care because there is a flow of unqualified applicants meaning companies are not willing to hire unqualified staff however, when qualified staff are employed because of the low pay rates staff spaces are not being filled or people are leaving their positions. Childminders are seeing a high demand in children and parents needing services however the increasing costs do not match with income, meaning they will be at a loss if they increase their ratio.

**Safeguarding**- Owston (2024) suggests Safeguarding is another major challenge in early years as companies, school and other establishments are not holding proper inductions for new staff, leaving staff unaware of policies and any current safeguarding issues that need to be made aware of. Staff also struggle with communication which, for safeguarding is a key factor in keeping staff informed on all children but also children with specific needs. Staff turnover is showing to be more common and more frequent leaving less time for staff to engage with children and get to know them on a regular basis and any Important information.



EYFS

Learning  
Through  
Play

Activities That  
support the first  
1,000 days



(Sarah, 2017)

# Messy Play

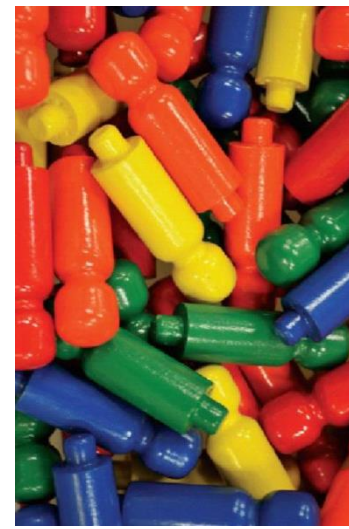
- ▶ Gascoyne (2018) explains that messy play is children engaging in a form of play whether it be with mud, sand, water or fabric it is a combination of sensory and creativity that children express through play. Whether it be mark making with different tools or with their bare hands children will find ways of turning a mound of mud or a water tray to enhance their creativity.
- ▶ This supports the first 1,000 days because whether a child is 6 months old or 2 years old, they will be able to have many rich experiences from any form of messy play.
- ▶ If a child has fabric in front of them, they may experience different materials, whether they like, or dislike new vocabulary will be discovered.
- ▶ An activity including paint where a child will learn textures with their hand or feet, they may learn or be captivated by the colours and how they change when they are mixed.
- ▶ Having children experience wet and sticky materials. This can be informative to children and adults to discover how they react to different textures but also if using shaving foam or mud to start to build an understanding of safety and that being careful with what goes in their mouths.



(Beth, 2023)

# Loose Parts Play

loose parts play are collectable, different and colourful objects that children can use to move and control them for different creative purposes they see fit. Loose parts may include gems, which could be used for their colourful purpose, sticks can become wands or stones become imaginative characters. All these loose part ideas are great tools for children to use within their play as this will widen their imaginative and creative play but also help with their problem solving in not needing specific items to form their characters. The play with loose parts can lead to endless scenarios all child led (Daly, 2015).



(Daly, 2015)



However, depending on age children should be supervised while playing with loose parts due to choking hazards.



# Stories and Reading

- ▶ UNICEF (date) states that reading to a child for only 15 minutes a day will increase their language skills, the ability to think about the story and remember or make connections with the story and real-life social situations.
- ▶ This will support the first 1,000 days because reading to children can be a comfort between an adult and child, the sound of a familiar voice or joy of having that attention with an adult can make a child feel validated and confident with their peers. Reading a story can indicate a routine for a child so they are aware of that it is time for bed, having that adult interaction can make sleeping patterns a lot easier and comforted for children (David, 2020).

(David, 2020)

# Outdoor Play



(1000 hours outside, no date)



(Fiesta Craft Ltd, No date)

- ▶ Outdoor play is a great experience for children and families as often it is a free experience that has complete open access to experience nature. Having access to the outdoors is a huge part of early childhood as children are experiencing the natural world they live in, leaving them with natural resources to widen their awe and wonder of the objects and materials around them. The activities in open spaces such as beaches or parks leave endless choice of building, discovering creatures and understanding how creatures live, however they can also mimic play they have already learnt like using stones, shells or sticks as people or characters for imaginative play but working with what they have (Davies, no date)
- ▶ Sprouts (2019) addresses the Reggio Emilia approach explores the freedom child has. Allowing the child to have child led play. Allowing children to independently take control of their play with adults helping to enrich their environment so that they have choice to explore on their own terms while engaging socially with their peers.
- ▶ Similarly, Montessori's approach is about children freely choosing from activities and resources by using what is around them, having their senses fully engaged to get a deep meaning and a more enriched version of imaginative play. However, Montessori's approach was that you allow children to freely choose with no adult involvement other than being an adult in the room or area to observe, Montessori found that children enriched their own experiences and independently learnt through those experiences (Sprouts, 2016).

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