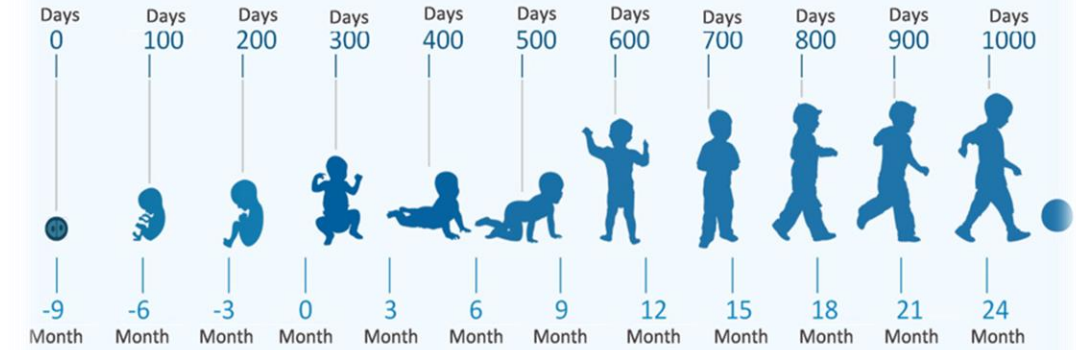


THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS – DIGITAL SCRAPBOOK

Contents-

- Introduction*
- Caregiving*
- Professional partnerships*
- Challenges*
- Activities.*



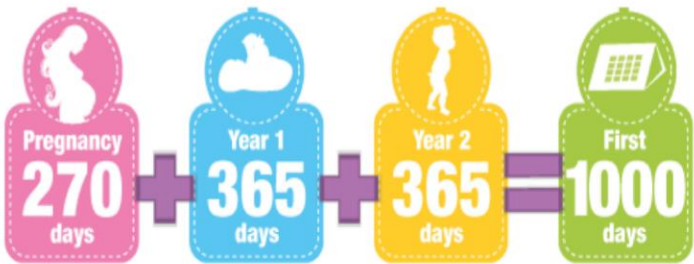
I can confirm that I have not used any form of artificial intelligence for this assignment.

THE FIRST DAYS OF LIFE

Source: (Mohamed, 2019).

HM Government (2021) concur that throughout infancy the child's brain experiences significant development. Secure attachment during this stage allows more effective emotional resilience and social competence. They state that is also when speech and language development begins which is another key element of a child's development. Demonstrating that during this stage the child experiences significant changes and enhancements and that it is a crucial part of their life.

Source: (Muslim Charity, no date)



NHS Wales (2023) agrees that prenatal care plays a critical and significant role in the initial 1,000 days. This is because it enables the observation, recognition and handling of any health problems during pregnancy for the mother and baby. Prenatal care supports the development of the baby whilst ensuring the guardian is prepared. Implying that prenatal care is important as it ensures both the mother and baby are healthy and safe throughout the pregnancy and that the parents are properly prepared to provide the best possible care for their child.

What is the first 1,000 days?

Let us begin by considering what the initial 1,000 days means and what is involved. Karakochuk et al. (2017) highlights that the first 1,000 days consists of the time from conception through to the individual's second birthday. Karakochuk (2017) believes that this time is critical for the child's physical and brain development, along with their overall wellbeing. HM Government (2021) supports this and declares that efficient brain development within the initial 1,000 days supports improved academic success along with positive relationships in the future. Indicating that a positive impact within the first 1,000 days results in a more successful future.

Source: (Camden Kids, 2020).

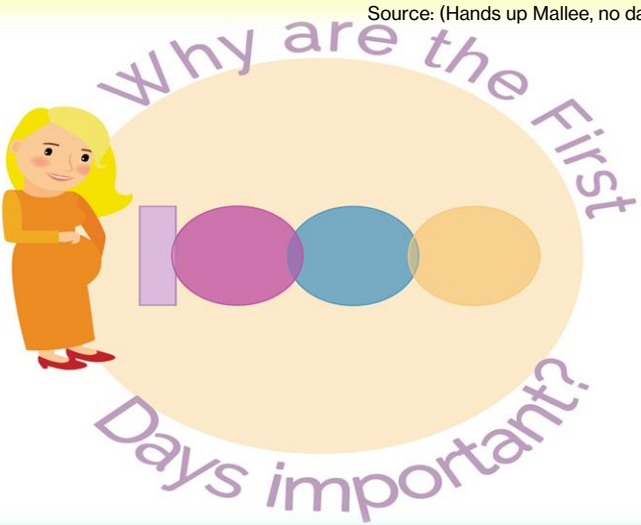
The importance of the First 1000 Days

From conception to two years

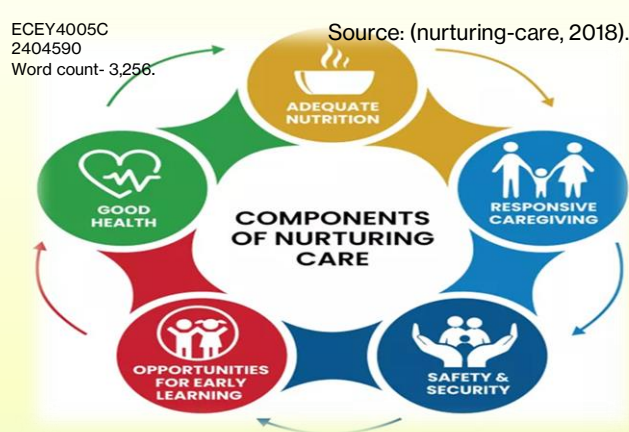


The Parent-infant Foundation (2024) emphasises that when a parent experiences issues in the initial 1,000 days it can result in the child suffering from long term affects. The Parent-infant Foundation (2024) goes onto to discuss that studies convey that a child with a distressed mother during pregnancy is more likely to experience mental health issues as a teenager. Suggesting that any negative experiences the parents may face in the first 1,000 days can impact the child negatively.

Source: (Hands up Mallee, no date).



Capitani et al. (2023) confess that the first 1,000 days is a significant element of an individual's life and an influential period to set foundations which effects will last a lifetime and reflect into further generations. They discuss that a newborn baby is born with majority of the neurons in their brain. Indicating that a child is highly influential from birth and that moral traditions can be adapted and stuck to throughout their life at this stage. They also state that the environment that the child is brought up in, in the initial 1,000 days can determine their future as they concur that growing up in a positive environment is essential for a child's holistic development. It is also put across those children without the opportunity to receive applicable care in the early years is more likely to experience learning difficulties during their school years and result in them being less productive in the future. Proposing that a child is highly influential from birth and establishing positive behaviours can be highly beneficial for their future success.



Early Years Alliance (no date) advise that an enabling environment should be secure, warm and nurturing with accommodating care providers who take time to build positive relationships with both the children and their family. They discuss that there should be a variety of resources and activities provided, both familiar to provide comfort for the children and new facilities to engage and stimulate the children. A sufficient space should be provided, ensuring that the children have access to both indoor and outdoor areas to inspire their imagination and enable role play opportunities. Portraying that an enabling environment should be safe, engaging and provide plenty of opportunities for learning and development.

The Welsh Government (2024) encourages that an enabling environment can influence a child's holistic development positively. This is because children learn from everything they witness, experience and listen to whether this be from the environment they are in or who they are with. Therefore, producing an enabling and accessible setting is essential to provide the best possible care for all those attending. Welsh Government (2024) add that an enabling environment should involve a well organised area, with required adaptations and resources whilst remaining a diverse area.

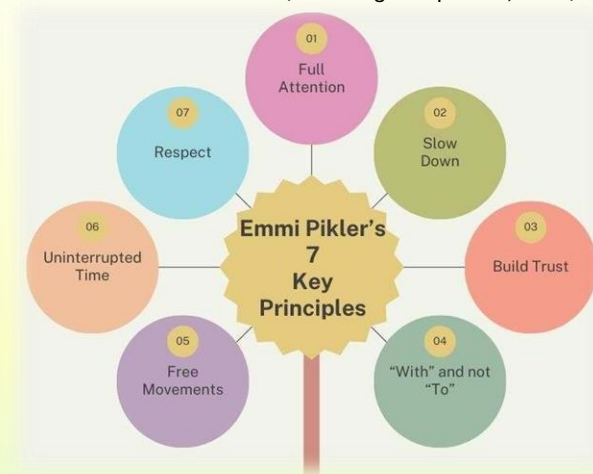
It is a well-known fact that the provision of efficient care ensures effective development in children. VNS Health (no date) confirms this by concluding that effective brain development, emotional security, language development and physical growth stems from the provision of exceptional care and therefore it is important. Nurturing-care (2018) highlights that safety and security, learning opportunities, good health, nutrition and supportive care makes up nurturing and exceptional caregiving. Displaying that nurturing care is made up of five different components and each one plays a key role in ensuring efficient care is provided.

Inclusion is defined as the means of accommodating everyone and involves managing contrasts by adjusting (Knowles, 2018). Whitters (2020) states that inclusive practise in the initial 1,000 days ensures that each child receives the appropriate care to support their individual needs to ensure efficient development. It also acknowledges variety, lessens complications and provides each child with the opportunity to succeed.

Caregiving

Care Learning (2024) highlights that Bronfenbrenner's Theory is known as the Ecological Systems Theory and it assists with the understanding of child development. It concentrates on the environment in which a child grows and progresses and how different environments impact this. Bronfenbrenner believed that the environment comprises of several layers and each layer has a direct or indirect influence on a child. Each of these layers symbolises different features of the child's environment. The microsystem is the deepest layer and involves the immediate environment of the child. This looks at the direct connections the child experiences daily including family, friends and school. The mesosystem concerns the connections between the different elements of a child's microsystem. It's fundamentally a system of microsystems. For instance, the interaction between the parent and a teacher as this will influence a child's education and development. The exosystem contains the broader community and whilst these factors do not directly concern the child it can still affect them. This could be facilities such as a parent's work environment as this will influence the parents stress levels which will then have an effect on the child. The macrosystem is the outmost layer and it considers the broader socio-cultural environment. This involves individual's cultural values, policies and laws which can affect opportunities for the child. The chronosystem involves the element of time as it relates to the child's environment including transitions such as school and parent divorce. Care Learning (2024) suggest that early year's settings can benefit from using Bronfenbrenner's theory to better understand a child's development. Portraying that the use of this theory in early years settings will assist practitioners with better knowledge on child development and result in providing efficient and nurturing care.

Source: (Little Bright Explorers, 2024).



Aspiring Beginnings (no date) highlights Pikler's theory and the seven key principles. Pikler emphasises the importance for the freedom of movement for a baby, adults having respect for children and the significance in the way a baby is touched and interacted with in the first 1,000 days. The first principle concerns providing 'undivided attention'. Conveying that full attention should be provided by guardians and care providers. The second principle involves 'slowing down' suggesting that providing a calmer and relaxed environment encourages further development. Next, is to 'build trust'. Implying that building a bond and trust can be achieved during simple tasks such as changing, feeding and bathing. The following principle confirms 'with and not to'. Suggesting that when completing activities, it is important to encourage the child to join in and not take over as this will encourage their development. The fifth principle relates to 'free movements' and it is confirmed that a baby should not be put into a position that they cannot get into themselves. This is because they become trapped and interferes with free movements. Pikler notes that free movements are not just about learning these movements but **how they learn** as this encourages independence, patience and persistence. The following principle regards to ensuring 'interrupted playtime'. Magda Gerber claims that if a nurturing setting with independence to explore is provided children will entertain themselves. Adults should not intervene as this is where individuality, self-esteem and confidence is adapted. Finally, concerns 'respect' and regards to acknowledging and respecting signs babies send us.

HM Government (2021) maintains that when a baby has at least one relationship with a devoted and dependent care provider it will improve their holistic development along with achieving better success in school and in the future. This is because the reassurance of a reliant and comforting care provider forms a secure attachment and these bonds help structure emotional scaffolding to sustain early development.

Celinska (2025) highlights how John Bowlby (1907-1990) developed an attachment theory that emphasises the significance of relationships in the early years for a child's growth. Bowlby's research underlines the influence that the connections that children have with their families and care providers have on their emotional development and social skills when forming future relationships. Bowlby (1969) concurred that attachment progresses in four stages. 'Pre-attachment' which concerns the period of birth to six weeks and involves the baby participating in manners such as crying to draw care providers. The second stage relates to 'attachment in the making' and involves the child from six weeks to six months. This period involves the child identifying the care provider. Next, is the 'clear-cut attachment' which ranges from ages six months to two years. At this stage Bowlby suggests that the child will typically experience separation anxiety and pursue proximity from their care provider. Lastly, contains the 'formation of a reciprocal relationship' which includes ages two and above and highlights the stage where the child develops further independence but sustains a bond with the care provider. Celinska (2025) puts across that a fundamental element of Bowlby's theory is his perception of a 'secure base'. Meaning that the care provider ensures a basis of security, so the child can explore whilst feeling comfortable that they can return to the care provider for comfort as and when required.

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP

- The Open University (2024) concurs that teamwork enables professionals to share relevant information and experiences. It encourages consistency, adapting from each other, a shared workload and improved outcomes.
- Crown database (2011) indicates that practitioners who work in partnership warrants that communities receive complete support tailored to their individual needs.
- Community change (2010) state that partnership working involves a variety of activities completed by a group of individuals to accomplish a communal purpose.



Jenkin (no date) confirms that nursery practitioners should be aware of the significant role that the first 1,000 days plays in a child's development. They stress that although majority of staff are aware of the importance of the child's wellbeing, healthy diet and exercise whilst attending the nursery, it is also crucial that they are aware of the impact this period of their life has on their future self.

Jenkin (no date) also points out the importance of building positive relationships with the families as well as the children. They highlight that building these bonds enables the recognition of specific struggles. This way professional support can be provided to hopefully resolve the issue which will not only have a positive impact on the guardian but also the child. They suggest that a noticeboard would be useful to present contact details of important services such as housing, mental health and domestic abuse. Indicating that early year's practitioners not only need to form positive relationships with the children they care for but also the families. It also signifies how important the role of a nursery practitioner is to support families as implications at home not only affect the guardians but the children too.



POVERTY

The first aspect to note when considering poverty and how it affects the first 1,000 days is that the Parent-Infant Foundation (2024) declares that a child's household income and their access to learning is strongly related to their progress. They highlight that at the age of three, a child with parents who have achieved a degree in university will have up to three times more advanced vocabulary in comparison to a child with parents who did not complete school. Highlighting that children living in deprived areas are less likely to progress at the same level as those not living in poverty. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2018) adds that a growing number of children living in deprived households has resulted in various health issues. Consequently, these children experiencing poverty are more likely to suffer from poor health. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2018) acknowledges the significant influence poverty has on the first 1,000 days of the child's life, their development and future. As a result, they aim to minimise these inequalities by implementing further funding, strategies and interventions. HM Government (2021) concedes that extreme poverty in the initial 1,000 days can result in chronic stress for the baby and influence their development negatively. They recognise that minor stress exposure is normal and essential for development. However, regular experiences of chronic stress may affect their nervous system and result in a negative influence on the child's future physical and mental health. Portraying that poverty often leads to severe stress for a child and then also impacts their development. Jenkin (no date) concurs that children living in areas of deprivation are not prepared to start school when they are five. Implying that children experiencing poverty are not ready to start school at the legal age and therefore it is likely that it will also impact their future.



CHALLENGE



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HEALTH

Health implications are generally considered when deeming challenges in providing high quality care for children in the early years. Parliament (2019) argue that a child is extremely vulnerable during the initial 1,000 days and therefore susceptible when it comes to illness. However, contagious illnesses are not the only health complications that may cause challenges in providing efficient care. Further health complications may also concern chronic diseases, disorders, conditions and many more. Parliament (2019) suggest that health issues in the initial 1,000 days can have a detrimental affect on the child's development. It is stated that when a baby's development is delayed during the first year it is expected that they will fall behind even further behind during the following years. However, it is confessed that there is chance for them to make up for this with specialist support to get back on path of healthy development. Likhari and Patil (2022) portray the importance of maternal nutrition and health during the first 1,000 days. It is highlighted that the child's health suffers when the mother has a poor diet and health. They also emphasise that one of the key factors influencing a child's growth is nutrition. This is because significant development happens throughout this period. They suggest that whilst the initial 1,000 days can embrace great opportunity in a child's life. The capability of a child to progress, learn and succeed is expressively influenced by how effectively or how inadequate the child and mother were looked after for during this period. This is due to this being the period where the brain develops to a significant level and when the fundamentals for long-term health are established. As a final point, they state that an individual's first 1,000 days are the most critical for the improvement of the brain, body and immune system. Malnutrition is closely related to numerous health complications such as obesity and weakened growth.

NHS (no date) emphasises the importance of participating in play and activities in the early years. It is believed to be important as it assists with both emotional and physical development whilst building connections. They concur that **sensory play** can provide meaningful learning as it is engaging, allows the child to explore alternate environments and stimulates their senses. Action For Children (2022) agrees that sensory play enables children to explore and make sense of the world around them. They add that sensory play, plays a crucial role in a child's development as most of their knowledge stems from stimulating their senses to preserve information. They also believe that it provides meaningful learning as they state that sensory play encourages language development, improves the child's memory and progresses their fine motor skills.

The curiosity approach (2024) confesses that encouraging children to participate in engaging activities that focus on fine and gross motor skills, coordination, creativity and teamwork will prepare them for their future in school.

Activities

O'Brien (no date) highlights how **forest schools** offers a more appealing and engaging approach to learning, especially for those children who struggle to concentrate and cooperate in a classroom environment. Little Bears Nursery (2024) stresses that forest school is more than just nature walks and playing outdoors. They confirm it is about child-led exploration and learning in a nature-based area as a classroom. O'Brien (no date) conveys that there are numerous benefits of forest school in the early years. These include improving their communication skills as language development was prompted by the sensory experiences they felt. They also advanced their physical development through stamina and the use of their fine and gross motor skills during specific activities. A further skill they developed according to O'Brien (no date) was their social skills. This was achieved by being more aware of their surroundings, consequences of their actions and their peers through different activities and teamwork. Little Bears Nursery (2024) agreed that forest schools in their setting also prompted physical and social skills for the children. They also added it improved the children's confidence and self-esteem as the freedom and activities enabled the children to be independent and take risks. It is a well-known fact that physical and social development is important in the first 1,000 days and therefore forest schools provides meaningful learning for children in the early years.

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International Approaches

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Reggio Emilia

Reggio Children (2022) express that Loris Malaguzzi established the Reggio Emilia approach. The Reggio Emilia approach indicates that education and learning should be child-led, including the way in which the environment is presented. Berg (2024) adds that the Reggio Emilia approach in early years views the children as curious individuals and allows them to be in control to develop from the environment and the relationships they form. They suggest that care providers often see children as vulnerable and therefore take over resulting in the child not reaching their full potential. Consequently, the Reggio Emilia approach recommends that children should be provided with plenty of opportunity to develop and learn on their own accord.



Montessori Theory of Education

Ruhl (2024) discusses Montessori Theory of Education and depicts that this technique of education is a method to classroom learning that stresses the importance of independence and choice. Which is like the Reggio Emilia approach in the way that it encourages more child-led learning. However, the Montessori Theory seems to emphasise more on a 'suitable environment'. It is confessed that this should involve a sense of cleanliness, organisation, attraction and harmony. After observation Montessori expressed how providing 'free choice' resulted in the children developing an intense interest in the activity they completed. Ruhl (2024) further underlined that Montessori claimed that children develop further when provided with specific material rather than with direct instruction. Lastly, Montessori emphasised the importance of the child developing holistically and not just academically. Again, this slightly contradicts Reggio Emilia's approach. Whilst Malaguzzi highlighted the importance of development it was more about the child reaching their full potential. Not so much about the significance of developing all factors.



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