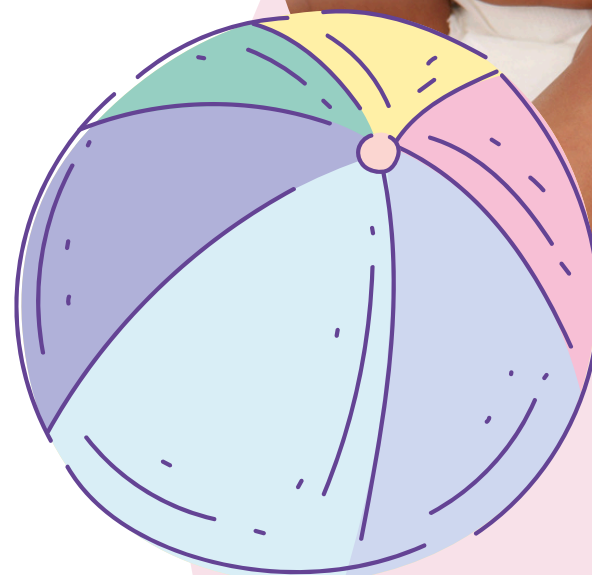
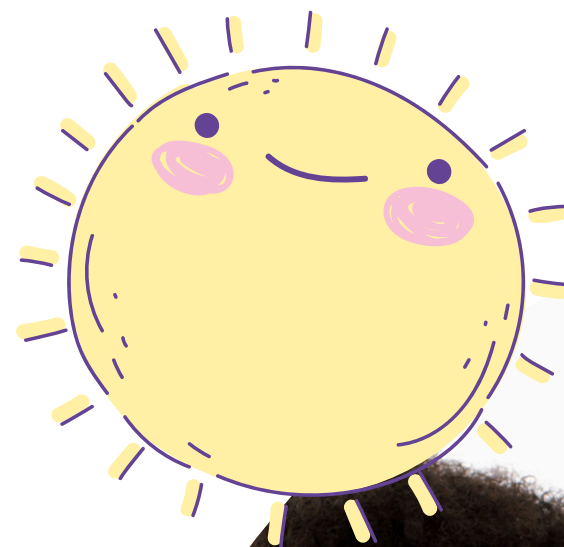
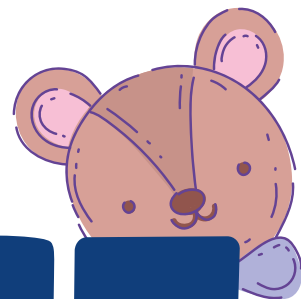


THE FIRST 1000 DAYS

ECEY4005

2412700

WORD COUNT: 2896



WHAT IS THE FIRST 1000 DAYS?



The First 1000 Days programme

This report describes how parents, communities, and wider society can work together to give children in Wales the best start in life.

Public Health Wales

(PUBLIC HEALTH WALES, 2023)



Global Paediatrics (2023) defines The First 1000 Days as the period between a child's conception and age two. During these days, there are fundamental stages of development that occur. These include conception, all trimesters of pregnancy, labour and birth, and the months that follow, leading into a child's second birthday. During these rapid stages of brain development, influencing factors mould the developing brain and create the foundations for future health, wellbeing and learning (Public Health Wales, 2023).



The first stage of development is the formation and growth of the organs, specifically the brain. It is during this stage that exposing factors, negative or positive, have an influence on the developing organs (Global Paediatrics, 2023). This heightened vulnerability makes the first 1000 days a critical period in which the parent could have the opportunity to positively or negatively influence their child's wellbeing.

Positive and negative influences include the parent's physical and mental health, relationships, education and choices made for the child's health, such as whether they choose to breastfeed and give their child immunisations. The style in which a child is interacted with and parented also has an impact. It is important to remember that genetics is also a vital aspect of a child's development (parliament, 2019).

Positive factors and being raised in an optimal environment from conception to second birthday are vital for physical and emotional health and social and cognitive development. In contrast, risk factors and a hostile environment could significantly impair development (Capitani et al., 2023).



WHY ARE THE FIRST 1000 DAYS IMPORTANT?



During the first 1000 days of life, 1000 neural connections are made in the child's brain every second (Likhar, 2022). Therefore, it could be argued that these crucial early days hold vast possibilities and fragility for a child's start in life, and what happens during them determines a child's course of life.

Malnutrition is just one aspect that profoundly affects the developing brain. A poorly fed and cared for mother would significantly impact a child's ability to thrive, develop and learn, which could result in obesity, impaired growth and mental health (Likhar, 2022). The World Health Organization Child Growth Standards also believe that for growth, development and long-term adulthood health, there must be adequate nutrition during these early days (Karakochuk, et al, 2017).

Therefore, investing in this period is a golden opportunity and the most effective way to help eliminate poverty and inequality.

One way this can be achieved is by providing positive, caring and engaging interactions such as singing and cuddling. The interactions help build and reinforce the neural connections in the developing brain (Stead, 2024) and promote positive social and emotional development. In turn, we can expect better physical and mental health when they reach adulthood.



(PECORELLI, 2020)

Social support is another area of importance in those early days. A recent study (Capitani, et al., 2023) supported this theory.

The study aimed to understand how social support affected pregnancy and motherhood and concluded that an enabling environment with adequate social support strongly influenced parents. Stating that 'The outcomes of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood are strongly influenced and conditioned by the social context in which they occur' (Capitani et al., 2023).



WHAT IS EXCEPTIONAL CARE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



UNICEF (2024) suggests that exceptional early childhood education and care are vital for ensuring a child has the best start in life.

Care is fundamental within the child’s microsystem and mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977 cited in Lopez,2021).

Exceptional care is provided through the secure attachments with the child’s primary caregivers. When children form these secure bonds with the caregivers that are in their microsystems, they feel secure and safe, thus creating a strong foundation to help develop the child’s emotional and physical health and wellbeing, and cognitive abilities (Department of Health and Social Care, 2021).

Exceptional care first begins with the mother. Gerhardt (2015) suggests that if a caregiver struggles with their own sensory and emotional regulation, then they are unlikely to be able to support a child in regulating theirs.

Essentially, the serve and return of emotions and facial expressions would not be possible. How can a baby be expected to regulate and adjust emotions and behaviours if they have not been shown how to?

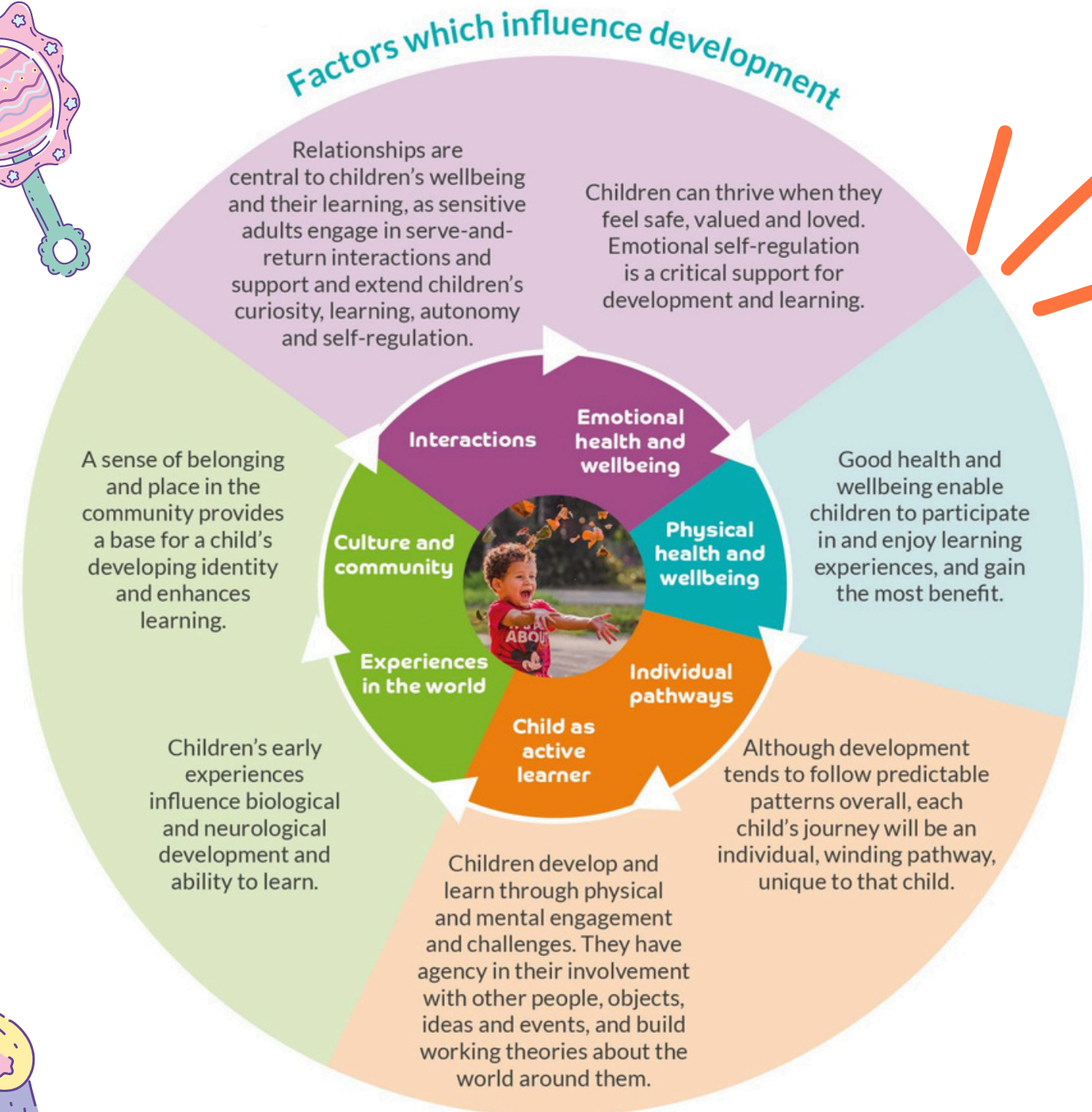
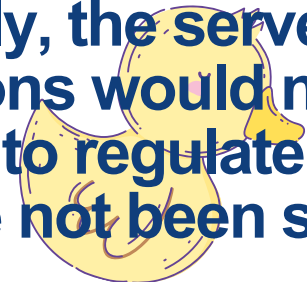


FIGURE 1: FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENT (BIRTHTOFIVEMATTERS, 2025)

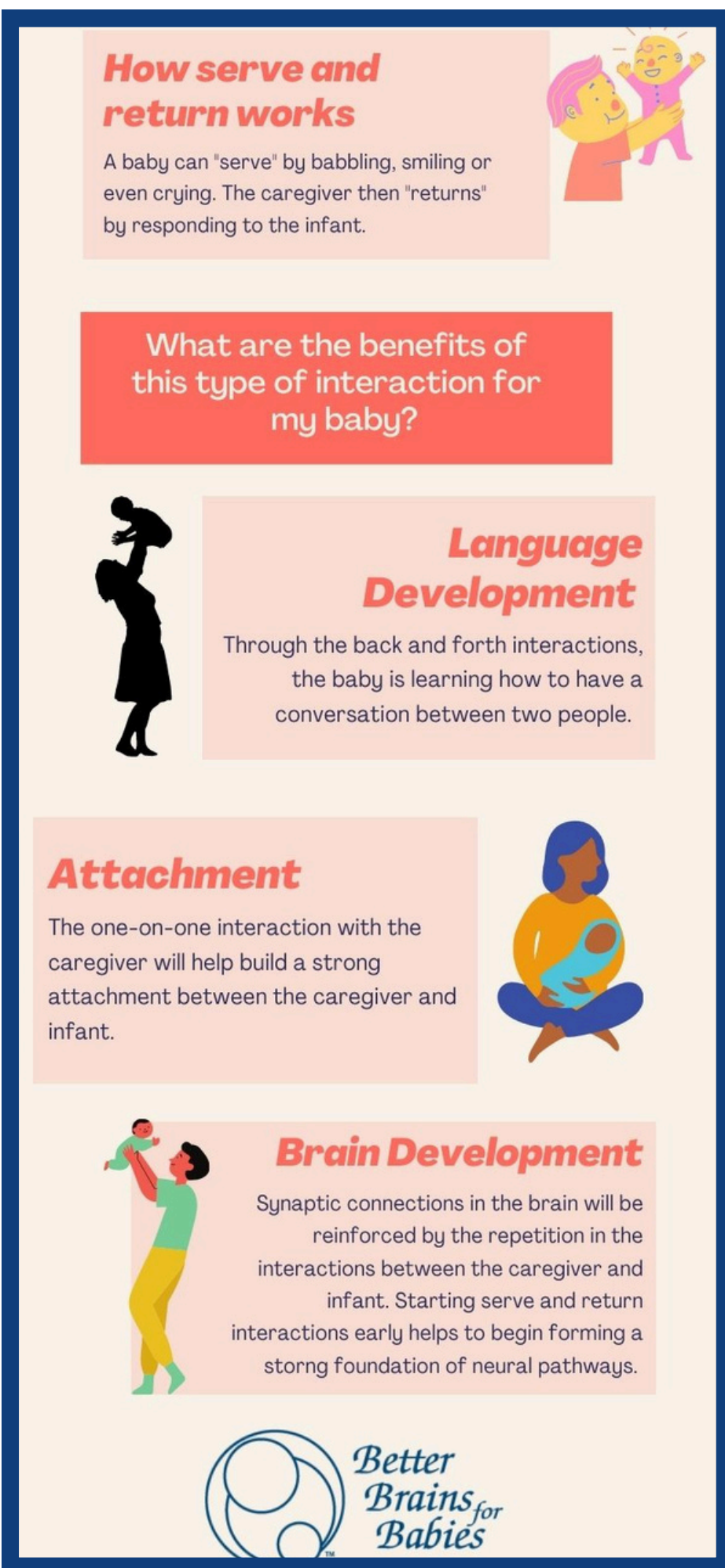


FIGURE 2: HOW SERVE AND RETURN WORK (GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICE, 2019)

However, positive serve and return experiences could profoundly impact an infant's brain development for the better (Harvard University, 2019).

Through serve and return, patterns emerge, and infants are more susceptible to noticing signals from their caregivers (Gerhardt, 2015). These patterns were often described as 'internal working models' (Bowlby, 1969 cited in Holmes, 2014).

This is supported by Emmie Pikler (1946), a paediatrician who, post World War, set up a home for orphaned children (Hargreaves, 2020). Pikler's theory was based around the trust and respect between an infant and the caregiver, who understands and responds to their needs. She also enforced the idea of self-initiated activity and the importance of the child being involved with their own routines.

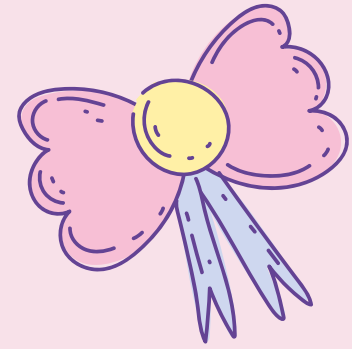
Pikler emphasised the importance of attachment between the consistent caregiver and infant and how these positive attachments, teamed with delivering exceptional care, can produce opportunities to explore, play, learn and communicate within the context of a safe and secure relationship (Hargreaves, 2020).

Nappy changing, dressing, and feeding all fall under respectful care. These experiences can be harmful and have a detrimental effect on the child if they are not carried out with respect from the caregiver and trust from the child (NDNA, 2022).

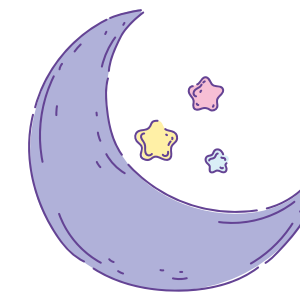
Intimate care routines often require one-to-one interactions. It is during these interactions that the opportunity to deepen bonds occurs. Simple narration of the tasks delivered can help make the child feel secure and less anxious (Tassoni, 2018).



(HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 2019)



ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS



In an early years setting, an enabling environment would be the first step in achieving exceptional care. Enabling environments allow children to explore safely and be cared for effectively, allowing them to develop in all seven areas of learning (Department for Education, 2024).

Enabling environments consist of differentiating zones, with numerous resources for the infants to play and explore, which also contain new and familiar experiences. It is important that settings are well-managed, as well as safe and accessible. With these aspects in place, children have ample opportunity to thrive and become the best versions of themselves (Twinkle, ND).



(KUPPER, 2022)

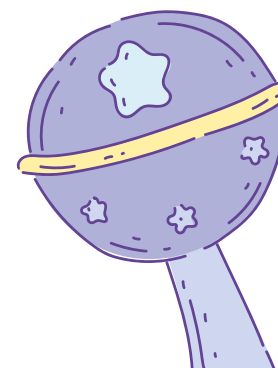


FIGURE 3: EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM (TEACH EARLY YEARS, 2025)

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS?

EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS MUST ENSURE THEY...



**PROVIDE MEANINGFUL
ACTIVITIES IN AN ENRICHING
ENVIRONMENT**

Meaningful activities can only be provided if the environment in which they take place is welcoming and purposely engineered for play (Stead, 2024). Practitioners must be aware of a child's developing needs and ensure they provide activities that facilitate, rather than hinder, their cognitive development (Stead, 2024). Simple activities like blowing bubbles encourage communication, support social and emotional development and are a sensory-rich experience (Department for Education, 2022). Practitioners must also ensure they are providing infants with autonomy over their play and ensure plentiful opportunities for free-play (Sagastui, et al, 2021).



**SUPPORT SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Practitioners can support an infant's emotional and social development in a variety of ways, one of which is by ensuring language is used throughout all activities. Simpler tasks like narrating what you are doing when changing their nappy or setting up an activity, can provide them with the social development they crave and need (Stead, 2024). Although a particular key person for a child is vital in any care setting, it allows the child to build supportive and strong relationships, aiding in their cognitive development and helping them develop an understanding of their own emotions (Department for Education, ND).



**PROVIDE ADEQUATE NUTRITION
AND ENSURE GOOD HEALTH**

By providing adequate nutritional snacks and meals, practitioners can ensure they are helping to close the gap in inequalities in children's health (Department for Education, ND). Also, with more than a third of children aged 2 – 15 overweight, it helps ensure children build positive relationships with food, helping reduce the chances of childhood obesity. Thus, it reduces the risk of obesity related illnesses in adulthood (Department for Health and Social Care, 2017). Karakochuk (2017), highlights the importance of good nutrition within the first 1000 days. She suggests that meeting the nutritional needs of infants can help avoid child mortality and illnesses like type 2 diabetes.



IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

There are 'many cogs to the wheel' when working with children, so for the partnerships to work effectively, they must work together and support one another. Article 18 of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC, 2022), outlines the importance of families and professional agencies working together to achieve the best for the child. However, when partnerships are not working in harmony, issues could occur, and often stresses arise.

Everyone has what is often referred to as a 'stress bucket'. The stress bucket outlines the importance of helping and alleviating stress to effectively manage everyday life (Liggins, 2021). If a parent's stress bucket is particularly full, due to the stresses of their child's education or not knowing where to turn to help, practitioners could help alleviate this by signposting families in the right direction. In contrast, parents could help practitioners by simply keeping lines of communication open and honest.

Public Health Wales (2023) also outlines the importance of support between partnerships. Suggesting that social support can 'act as a buffer', against the impact of parental stress on the child.

New Zealand's Te Whariki curriculum is a positive example of effective partnership working. It focuses heavily on wellbeing, learning and development. Highlighting the importance of responsive and reciprocal partnerships for this to be achieved (Hargraves, 2021). The Welsh Curriculum also supports this with The Four Purposes (Welsh Government, ND), ensuring that the concept of effective and positive partnerships is a principle that is embedded at the core of the framework.

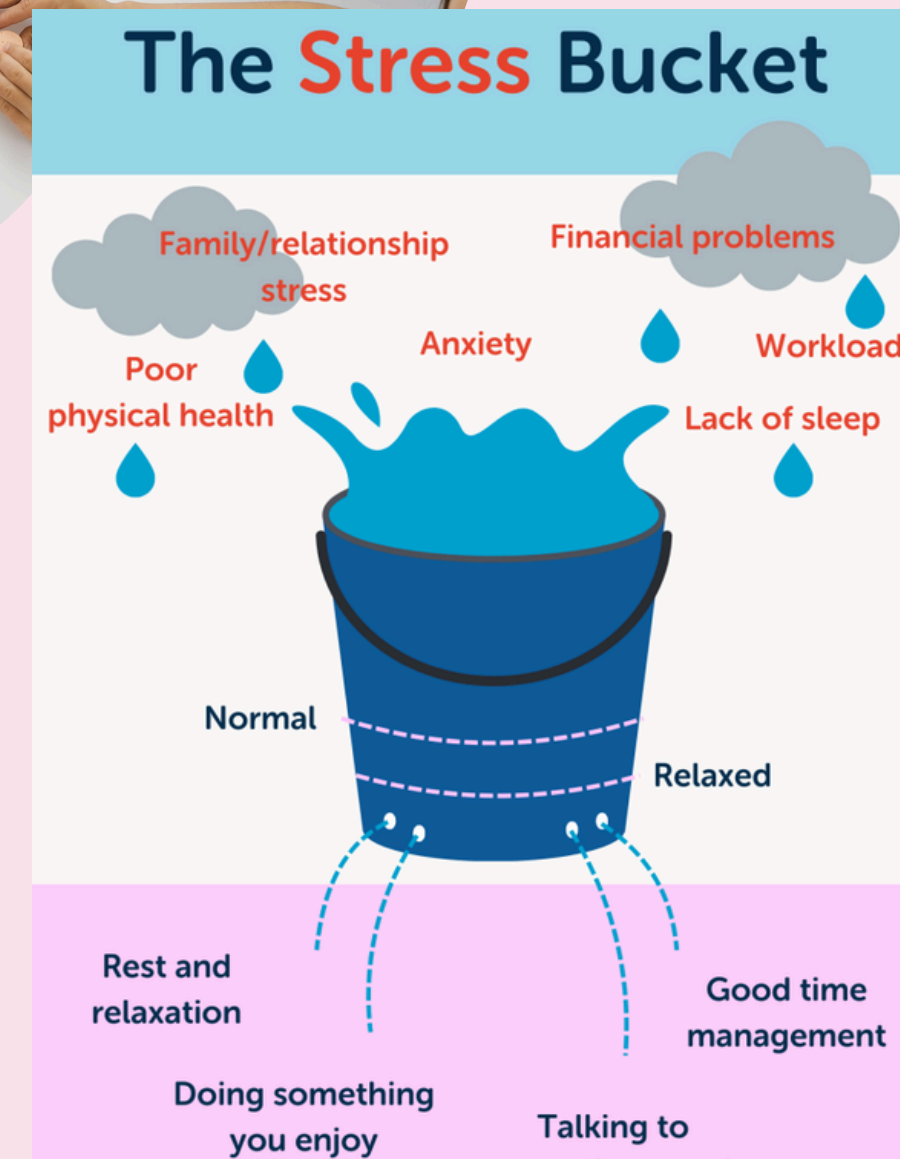


FIGURE 4: THE STRESS BUCKET (KNIGHTS, 2024)

IMPACTING MATERNAL FACTORS ON A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

During the first 1000 days, a child is vastly provided experiences by the parents; this is why maternal factors such as stress, anxiety and depression have a profound effect within this crucial period (Public Health Wales, 2023).

Studies have shown that elevated levels of maternal stress have impacted foetal brain development and contributed to behavioural and mental health issues in infants (Van Den Heuvel, 2022).



(YATES, 2014)

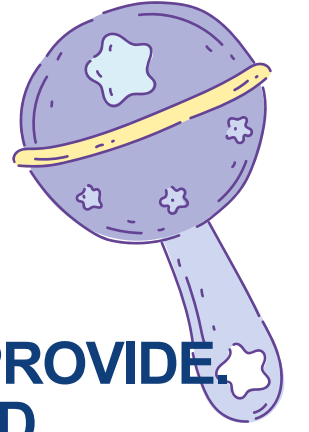
The public health model of parenting support identifies the need for societies, parents, and local communities to collaborate effectively to give children the best start in life. When parents have adequate support, are well educated on the importance of routines and nutrition, and are signposted to further agencies for help and advice, they are more likely to thrive in their role (Public Health Wales, 2023).

However, an article by Likhar (2022) 'Importance of Maternal Nutrition in the First 1000 Days of Life and its Effects on Child Development', stresses the importance of proper maternal nutrition and suggests that without it, a child's immune system, metabolism and organ development are at risk of adverse effects.

Support for parents should begin at the start with pre-natal care. The NHS' antenatal services provide services that monitor pregnancy, offer screenings and blood tests and signpost to other agencies when further support is needed for the mother (NHS, 2023).

This care is then passed over to a Health Visitor who will monitor and advise until age three. Health Visitors work with numerous agencies from government departments, including social, education and health care and help provide a sound infrastructure of knowledge and support (Institute of Health Visiting, ND).

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY CARE?



THE EARLY YEARS SECTOR IS CONTINUOUSLY EXPERIENCING CHALLENGES WITH THE QUALITY OF CARE IT CAN PROVIDE. AMONGST THOSE CHALLENGES ARE STAFF RETENTION ISSUES, FUNDING, THE LASTING EFFECTS OF COVID-19 AND INEQUALITIES BETWEEN SETTINGS (OFSTED, 2024). BELOW TWO WILL BE EXPLORED FURTHER.

LACK OF FUNDING

A blog published by the Department for Education (2022) expressed ways in which they plan to 'drive down' costs within childcare. It proposed changes to staff ratios and support more people in becoming childminders, as they are a cheaper alternative to nurseries.

However, in 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) published a report that revealed that just under half of childcare providers did not have sufficient funding to cover their outgoings (Department for Education, 2024). The report highlighted the fact that providers did not feel that it was worth offering additional places to children, as they could not justify the extra staff with the current funding they were receiving.

Therefore, providers are having to use their imagination when it comes to saving on costs. Many nurseries have started to use apps to document and assess learning, as opposed to paper. As well as using technology for admin duties, thus saving on printing costs too (Brook, ND).

Other ways nurseries are reducing costs is by making the most of what the local communities have to offer, whether it be charity shops, donations or by simply using the outdoors as a learning resource (Brook, ND).

Big organisations, like ASDA (2024), have made loyalty programmes to help raise funds for local schools. Utilising these approaches is a great way to bring in extra income, with many of the smaller local supermarkets also doing their part by donating food that is too good to go. This not only supports the settings but the provider's families, too.



EFFECTS OF COVID-19

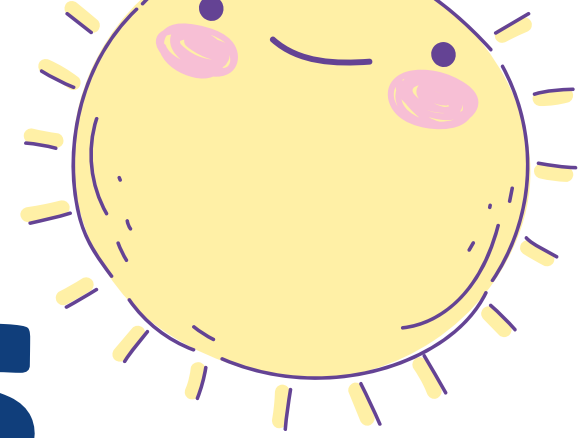
The first 1000 days is a crucial period for infants' development, so what impact did COVID-19 and the national lockdowns have on those children? Babies born after the first quarter of 2020 are commonly known as the Pandemic babies (McCarthy, 2022).

In 2022, a report was published to highlight the lasting damage that COVID-19 had on babies born during that time. The investigation found that infants born during the pandemic, whether exposed to the virus or not, had lasting developmental delays (Shuffrey et al., 2022). They scored much lower on motor skills, both fine and gross, and personal and social development compared to infants born prior to the start of the pandemic. The findings stated that at age 6 months, the COVID-19 infection is linked with neurodevelopmental variances (Shuffrey, et al., 2022).

Therefore, the 'Pandemic babies' required closer monitoring of their needs. Poor social and emotional skills in children, heeded way for behavioural issues, including anger, anxiety and withdrawal (Guevara, 2022). With an increased number of children starting pre-school nursery with high-stress levels and delays in cognitive and motor skills, settings are having to work harder to fill the gap and nurture the children into well-rounded individuals (Guevara, 2022). thus taking extra time and more resources.



ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT A CHILD IN THE FIRST 1000 DAYS



During the first 1000 days, infants rely heavily on their senses. They use them to help make sense of things that are familiar or different and help them develop their understanding of the world around them. This is why activities that support an infant in developing these senses are so important (Gascoyne, 2018).



SENSORY AND MESSY PLAY

Sensory and messy play may include any resources that stimulate an infant's senses with exploration. These could be resources that are dry like sand and lentils, wet like beans and jelly and sticky like playdough. These resources can sometimes be used together to create a more significant stimulus (Gburczyk, 2012 cited in Gascoyne, 2017).

Soper (Nd) suggests that if given the opportunity to explore all their senses, children have the ability to further develop their use of language and working memory, thus aiding cognitive development and by investigating their sense of touch, they start the beginnings of their fine motor skills (Baby Sparks, 2022).

Furthermore, activities like sensory bins offer a wide array of possibilities that can be modified to suit an individual's needs or interests. Many children may have sensory aversions, meaning the bins could be tailored to that specific child, so they are exposed or hidden to the texture or smell (Labuz, 2022).



(YOUTUBE, 2015)



FIGURE 5: SENSORY PLAY TRAY (ETSY, 2025)



READING ALOUD

The National Literacy Trust (2020) suggests that children gather a wealth of knowledge and experiences when being read to. Not only does it help build relationships and self-esteem, but it also feeds their imagination, improves language acquisition, and aids in better quality sleep.

This is supported by the Department for Education (2022), who suggest that reading daily, even for just a few seconds, can have a tremendous impact on children, regardless of age. They go on to suggest that reading does not have to be limited to traditional books and that recipes and poetry could be utilised as well.

Furthermore, not only does research show that story telling is important for cognitive, language and prereading development (Gillespie, 2019) but with incorporating reading with outdoors activities and materials, such as mud and sand, it can help develop fine and gross motor skills (Smalltalk, Nd).



INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

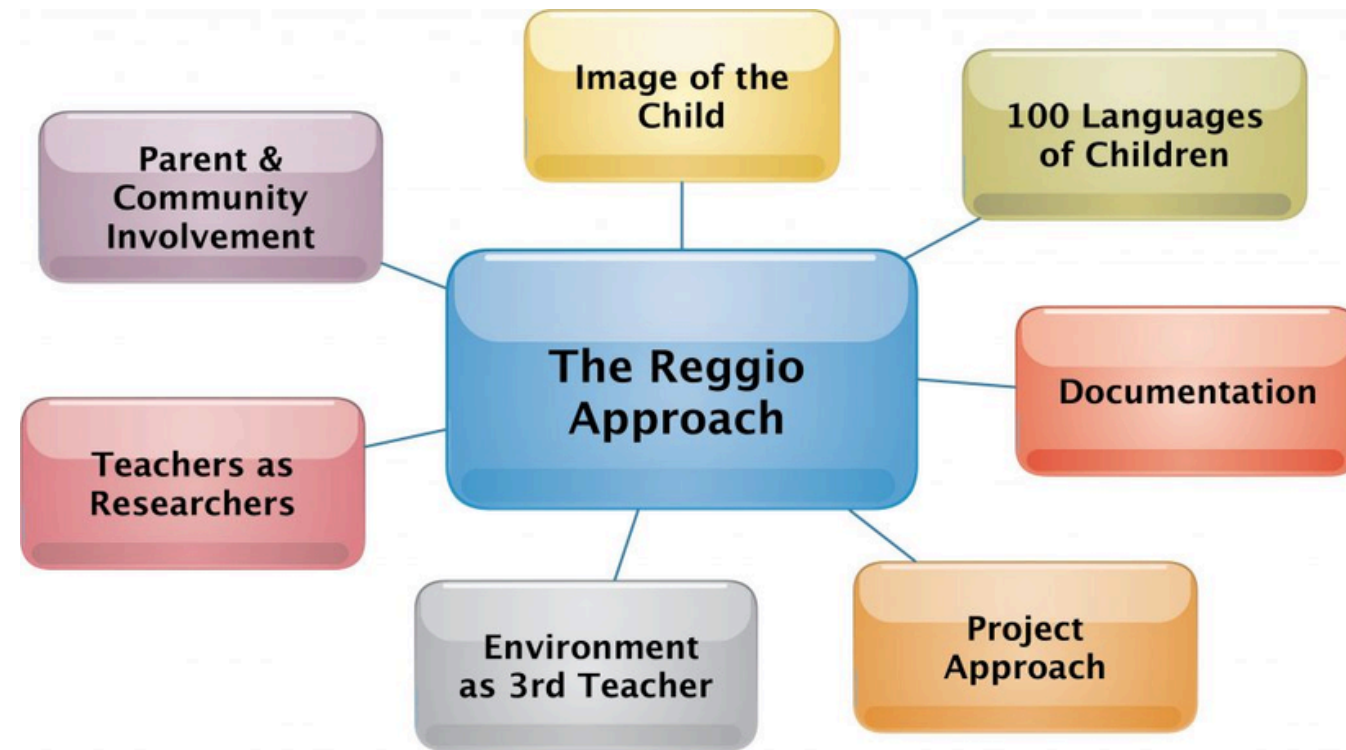


FIGURE 6: THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH
(STONEBROOK DAY SCHOOLS, 2025)

Forest schools, dating back to the 1950s (Forest School Foundation, n.d.), are defined by six core principles that interlock to establish a unique outdoor, nature based learning environment, giving children an opportunity to explore and take risks. This is unlike Reggio Emilia, which has a focus on indoor, interconnected learning spaces organised to provoke curiosity (Reggio Emilia Approach, 2022).

However, both approaches agree that the environment is a significant aspect of the child's learning, helping foster holistic development.

Both Forest Schools (Forest School Foundation, ND) and Reggio Emilia (Reggio Emilia Approach, 2022) avoid traditional assessment methods, preferring ongoing observations, and while Forest Schools say their educators are seen more as facilitators of the environment, Reggio Emilia educators have a more active role and are seen as collaborators.

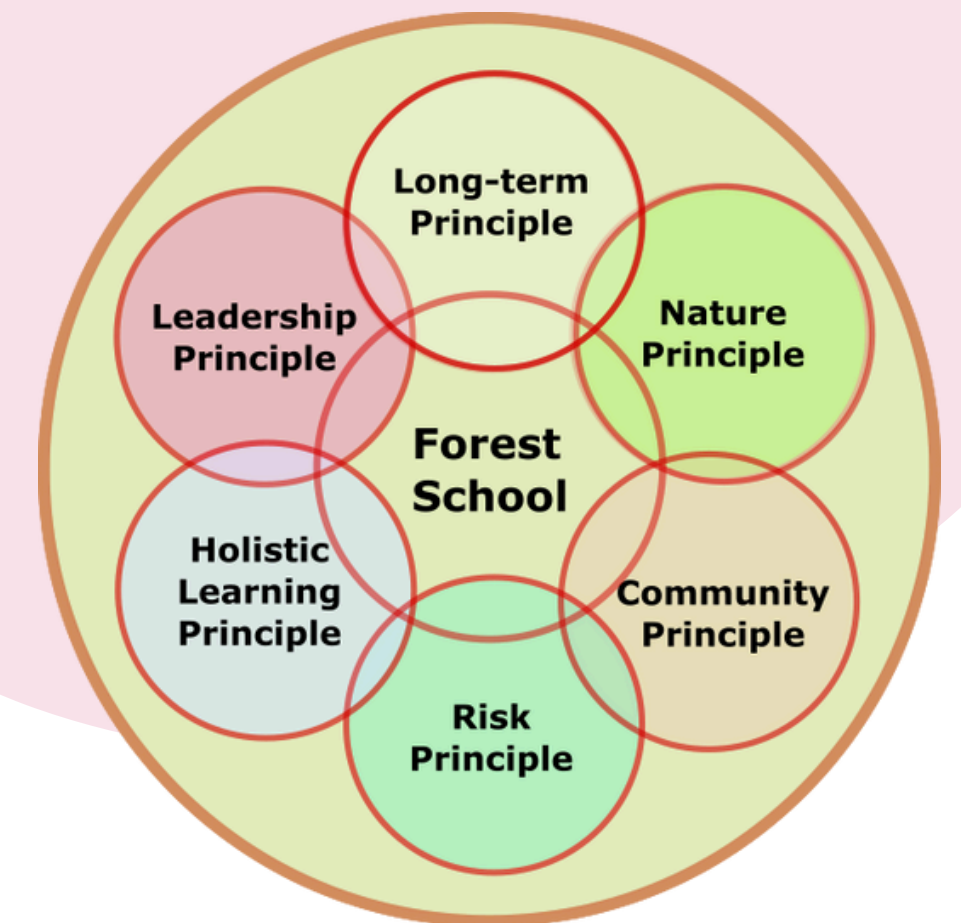


FIGURE 7: 6 PRINCIPLES OF FOREST SCHOOLS (FOREST
SCHOOL FOUNDATION, ND)

AI GUIDANCE

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) on 19 January 2025 to check my work using the prompts:

1. Please check my text for readability, grammar and syntax.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Reference list:

ASDA. (2024) *ASDA Rewards*. Available at: <https://corporate.asda.com/newsroom/2024/02/09/asda-rewards-makes-millions-available-to-primary-schools-with-industry-first-loyalty-programme-giveaway> (Accessed: 14 January 2025).

Baby Sparks. (2022) *Why sensory play or “messy play” is great for your child's development*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUzNEr2vSiM&ab_channel=BabySparksParentingTV (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

BBC (2024) *Childcare Shortage Worsens as Costs Rise*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-68580918#:~:text=But%20the%20early-years%20sector%20has%20been%20struggling%20with,spending%20more%20on%20nursery%20fees%20than%20their%20mortgage> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Bellingham, R. (2014) *Why we should all be reading aloud to children*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBuT2wdYtpM&t=331s&ab_channel=TEDxTalks (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Birth to 5 matters. (n.d) *Child Development*. Available at: <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/child-development/> (Accessed: 17 January 2015).

Brook, C. (n.d) ‘*10 Ways for Early Years Settings to Save Money*’. Available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/10-ways-for-early-years-settings-pviblog> (Accessed: 14 January 2025).

Capitani, E. (2023) *Factors Influencing the First Thousand Days Of Life: The importance of Nurturing Care*. Available at: <https://www.jpnh.org/index.php/jpnh/article/view/2850> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Department for Education (2022) *10 top tips for parents to support children to read*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read> (Accessed: 18 January 2025).

Department for Education (2022) *Help for Early Years Providers, Interactions*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/areas-of-learning/communication-and-language/interactions> (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

Department for Education (2022) *How We Are Driving Down the Cost of Childcare*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pulse-surveys-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=131bf42b-959e-4026-ad0d-d45ffea28e76&utm_content=daily (Accessed: 14 January 2025).

Department for Education (n.d) *Help for early years providers, nutrition*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition> (Accessed: 18 January 2025).

Department for Education (n.d) *Help for early years providers, overview*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/areas-of-learning/personal-social-and-emotional-development> (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

Department of Health and Social Care (2021) *'The Best Start to Life'* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Department of Human Services. (2019) *Better brains for babies*. Available at: <https://bbbgeorgia.org/serve-and-return-interactions> (Accessed: 18 January 2025).

Etsy.com (2025) *Sensory bin*. Available at: https://www.etsy.com/uk/search?q=sensory%20bin&ref=search_bar (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

Forest School Association. (n.d.) *Full principles and criteria for good practice*. Available at: <https://forestscholassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/> (Accessed: 19 January 2020).

Forest School Foundation. (n.d.) *Forest School Foundation, Outdoor Learning, Bright Futures*. Available at: <https://www.theforestschoolfoundation.org/background-information-history> (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Forest Schools (2023) *What are forest schools? An introduction*. Available at: <https://www.forestschools.com/pages/what-is-forest-school-an-introduction> (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Gascoyne, S. (2017) '*European Early Childhood Education*', Research Journal, 25 (2), pp.272–291. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2017.1288019>

Gascoyne, S. (2018) *Messy Play in the Early Years: Supporting Learning through Material Engagements*. Routledge

Gillespie, L. (2019) *Rocking and rolling. Reading with babies matters*. Available at: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2019/reading-with-babies-matters#:~:text=For%20years%2C%20researchers%20have%20shown%20that%20reading%20to,important%20for%20building%20children%E2%80%99s%20vocabulary%20and%20prereading%20skills> Accessed: (18 January 2025).

Global Paediatrics (2023) *The key 1000 life-changing days*. Available at: www.elsevier.com/locate/gpeds (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Guevara, H. (2022) *How Has Covid-19 Impacted Infants and Toddlers' Social and Emotional Development?* Available at: <https://www.ffyf.org/resources/2022/09/how-has-covid-19-impacted-infants-and-toddlers-social-development/> (Accessed: 14 January 2025).

Hargraves, V. (2021) *Te wharkik – an introduction to early childhood curriculum*. Available at: <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/te-whariki-an-introduction-to-the-early-childhood-curriculum-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/> (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

Harvard University. (2019) *5 steps to developing brain*. Available at: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/videos/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Holmes, J. (2014) *John Bowlby attachment theory*. 2nd edn. Routledge

Institute Of Health Visiting (n.d) *What is ahealth visitor?* Available at: <https://ihv.org.uk/for-health-visitors/what-is-a-health-visitor/> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Karakochuk, C.D., Whitfield, K.C., Green, T.J., and Kraemer, K. (2017). *‘The Biology of the First 1,000 Days’*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315152950>

Percorelli, S (2020) *The first 1000 Days of Life*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyrG_EFd4-k&ab_channel=TEDxTalks (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Public Health Wales (2023) *Adopting a public health approach to supporting parents*. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/adopting-a-public-health-approach-to-supporting-parents-can-help-give-children-best-start-in-life/> (Accessed 16 January 2025).

Public Health Wales (2023) *First 1000 Days. A public approach to supporting parents*. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/the-first-1000-days-programme/> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Reggio Emilia Approach (2022) *The Reggio Emilia Approach*. Available at: <https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/valori-en/> (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Reggio Emilia. (2024) *‘How the Reggio Emilia approach nurtures a child’s wellbeing’*. Available at: <https://reggioemilia.com.au/blog/how-the-reggio-emilia-approach-nurtures-a-childs-well-being/> (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Sagastui, J., Herrán, E. and Anguera, M.T. (2022) *‘Adult intervention levels in young children’s free play: an observational study on how Pikler educators combine the instrumental and relational dimensions of their educational activity’*. 37, pp. 707–728
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-021-00560-2>

Shuffle LC, Firestein MR, and Kyle MH. (2022) *‘Association of Birth During the COVID-19 Pandemic with Neurodevelopmental Status at 6 Months in Infants with and Without in Utero Exposure to Maternal SARS-CoV-2 Infection’*, JAMA Paediatrics, 176(6) Available at: doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.5563

Soper, R. (n.d) *Sensory Play*. Available at: <https://learninghub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ISP-Resource-Sensory-Play-FA-web.pdf> (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

Stead, C. (2024) *‘The First 1000 Days, Designing Your Nursery with Babies Brain Development in Mind’*. Available at: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/the-first-1000-days> (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

Stead, C. (2024) *‘Unlocking potential – Investing in the first 1000 days for brain development and school readiness’*. Available at: https://nurserymanagementshow.co.uk/blog-2/guest-blog-unlocking-potential-investing-first-1000-days-brain-development-school-readiness?page=1&gad_source=1 (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

Stonebrook Day Schools (2025) *Guiding Principle of the Reggio Emilia Approach*. Available at: <https://stonebrookdayschool.com/childcare-daycare-preschool-curriculum/reggio-emilia-in-murfreesboro-tn/> (Accessed: 19 January 2025).

Tassoni, P. (2018) *EYFS best practice, all about care routines*. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/content/features/eyfs-best-practice-all-about-care-routines> (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

Teach Early Years (2025) *Early Years Classroom*. Available at: <https://www.teachearlyyears.com/enabling-environments/view/hygge-in-the-early-years> (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

The National Literacy Trust (2020) *Reading to Children is so powerful, so simple and yet so misunderstood*. Available at: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/blog/reading-children-so-powerful-so-simple-and-yet-so-misunderstood/> (Accessed: 18 January 2025).

Twinkl. (n.d) *What is an enabling environment EYFS?* Available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/enabling-environments-eyfs> (Accessed: 18 January 2025).

UNCRC. (2022) *How we protect children's rights*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

UNICEF. (2019) '*Why early childhood education and care matter*' Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/stories/why-early-childhood-education-and-care-matter> (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

Van Den Heuvel, M. I. (2022) '*From the Womb into the World: Protecting the Foetal Brain from Maternal Stress During Pregnancy*'. Policy Insights from the Behavioural and Brain Sciences, 9(1), pp. 96-103. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/23727322211068024>

Welsh Government (2024). *Curriculum for Wales, the 4 purposes*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/> (Accessed: 17 January 2025).

Yates, D. (2014) *Do the First 1000 Days Determine the Rest of Your Life?* Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCscN4zuvd4&ab_channel=TEDxTalks (Accessed: 16 January 2025).