



The First 1000 Days.

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At Birth babies are processing the world around them from the moment they open their eyes and let out their first cry. One of the first learning experiences a baby will have is the immediate required skin on skin contact with the Childs mother, father or other caregiver that will be present in the newborns life. Skin to skin contact is a beneficial activity for both the baby and the mother. Suggested by Unicef (2018) skin to skin contact between mothers and babies allows them to be calmed down an relaxed after the experience of childbirth, skin to skin can also encourage the production of breastfeeding hormones and mothering to envelope both the mother and child to strengthen their bond and trust.

The consistency of skin on skin contact in the Childs life will mutate into a routine which will be adapted from the child learning from a previous experience, for example this previous experience may be from breastfeeding as skin on skin contact will occur at this activity. The association of the Childs skin coming in contact with a caregivers skin (most commonly the mothers) the child will recall previous experiences and will link in the Childs brain that it is time for food.

Jerome Bruner

Bruner had many theories regarding children and how they learn. One particular theory he had was that children and babies especially 'learn from doing' (McLeod, 2019). The learn from doing attitude is grasped from infancy with babies imitating sounds and facial expressions from their caregivers and reaction to specific behaviours and sounds.

Spiral curriculum

Jerome Bruner created the idea of including a spiral curriculum. This curriculum highlights the importance of taking information further. This curriculum would focus on a topic of the curriculum and continue to come back and expand the learners knowledge later on so the child will eventually have a full understanding of the topic (University of Detroit Mercy 1960).

Pregnancy and Parenting



Parents when they find out they are pregnant will experience a range of emotions and reactions to the news. Commonly the reaction to parents finding out they are having a baby can go from excited and then convert to stress and anxiousness as it may be a new experience especially for first time parents (NHS, 2020). It is important that professionals support pregnant mothers and their partners or the future babies caregivers through the pregnancy and encourage communication around the topic to aid the relief of anxiousness. When preparing for a new baby it is important that families have that strong connection to outside support as the times may be stressful and pressures will be high as the anticipation of the arrival of the new baby looms. New mothers can talk to mothering groups to gain insight and knowledge how to go through the stages of pregnancy and labour until the baby is born. (NHS, 2020).

Unplanned Pregnancy

The reaction to an unplanned pregnancy can be extremely different. A reaction to an unplanned pregnancy can include anxiety, shock, regret, isolation, fear and even depression (The source 2020). Unplanned pregnancies or planned pregnancies can always face the fear of domestic abuse from their father/husband or the other can inflict the abuse on the unborn child. (NHS, 2020).

Unhealthy Pregnancy

For a baby to grow and develop effectively and correctly it is important that the mother that is carrying it maintains a healthy diet and appropriate sleeping patterns to lower stress and increased health levels. If the mother does not eat a balanced healthy diet the baby will not be receiving any beneficial nutrient to grow and develop fully. Mothers need to ensure a healthy diet when pregnant as it can cause complications and health problems for the child as they grow, the child may be faced with tackling obesity and heart problems as the heart will be put under strain (Science News 2008). Another way a pregnancy can be deemed unhealthy is by the mother taking part in regular alcohol abuse and consumption, similarly drug abuse and smoking is also extremely toxic for the unborn child. CDC (2020) Suggest that the effects of tobacco smoke on an unborn baby can cause 'tissue damage particularly in the lung and brain'. A child growing up with birth defects from the drug abuse that they have experienced when they were in the womb of their mother can lower the Childs quality of life and can limit life expectancy. The use of illegal drugs while a mother is pregnant can sometimes result in miscarriage (Stanford Children's Health 2021). Mothers need to bring up their the children in a positive environment to allow them to have the best quality of life and to reach their full potential.

Babies Brains



A known saying is that babies brains are like sponges soaking up information and the world around them. The baby's brain development begins in the mother's womb where they are forming neurons. Bradley Voytek (2013) wrote that In adults there are '86 billion neurons' in the adult brain. As the baby begins to grow and have more experiences Neurons begin to grow and strengthen and connections and links are made. Schemas are describable as being 'mental codification of experience' by Merriam Webster (2022).

Serve And Return

Babies are very responsive and parents find their child will react to different things and may even try to imitate and copy sounds, actions and expressions. These examples of what babies and infants will react too is part of serve and return. Serve and return is when the parent or caregiver will display an action for example waving their hand and the baby or infant attempting to copy the movement too. Babies will react with eye contact and enjoy focusing on faces when they are close. Skin to skin is another example of serve and return as it causes a reaction in the child or infant's brain.

What a Baby Needs in Their Early Life

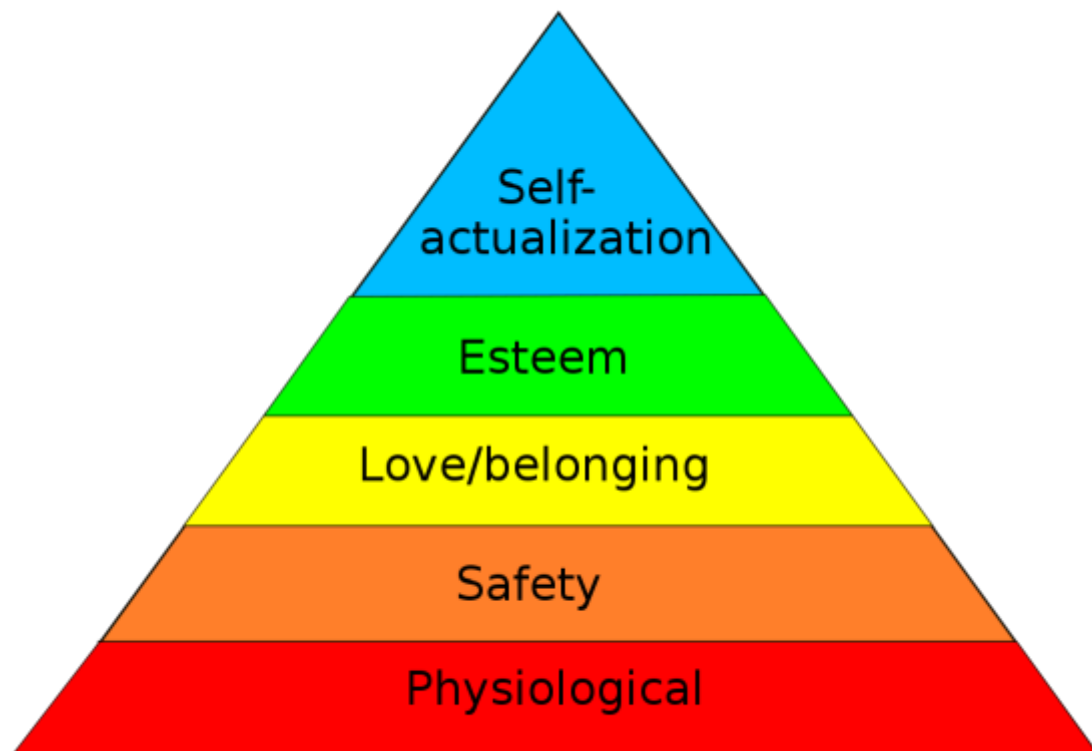
- **Development** - Opportunities to reach their full potential. support from parents and carers to meet their milestones.
- **Environment** - The Babies environment needs to be safe and appropriate. Multi-sensory opportunities to engross the senses and encourage exploration and development schemas to progress
- **Relationships** - Responsive and caring figures in their life. Good role models that have trust and love for the baby to keep calming and relaxed growing environment.

- **Stimulation** - sensory rich environments. Activities that allow the opportunity for expansion and further growth. Cooperative parenting to play and engross the baby.
- **Nutrition** - Substantial meals and regular breast milk feeding for new-born babies . Infants going onto solid food need to follow an eat well plate to gain full nutritional diet to support development.
- **Awareness of needs** - Parents or carers aware of when the baby or infant needs support and knows how to meet the babies needs to avoid discomfort or ill health.

(Bryce *et al* 2020)

Meeting the baby or infants needs and having a stimulated upbringing will empower the child in further education and will allow the child to achieve their full potential

Maslow - Hierarchy of Needs and Infancy



Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs to identify potential needs of a child that need to be met in order for them to learn and achieve. The lower region of the triangle focus on the deficiency needs of the child, these needs need to be met before the top segment of the hierarchy can be achieved. The levels of the hierarchy are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self actualization (McLeod, S 2020)

The Hierarchy and Babies

Physiological - It is essential that babies and infants have these needs met as they are inexperienced and vulnerable and cannot meet these needs without the support of a parent or carer. Babies need

regular feeds of milk to help them grow and infants need healthy meals to support growth and development. They need warm safe places to sleep and live as babies cannot regulate their body heat and rely on others or blankets and warm clothing to keep them warm or cool depending on the external temperature.

Safety - Babies and infants are always wary of strangers (stranger danger). Babies need a key primary caregiver that they are safe and comfortable with and can be calmed in the presence of. The feeling of distress for babies is overwhelming. Safety needs and babies are also to ensure that they do not get ill and are in an environment that won't endanger their health or wellbeing. (UX, 2021)

Love and Belonging - The relationships that a baby has when it is born can go expand from immediate family Parents and siblings, to developing friendships in infancy and then when reaching adolescence potential relationships with a romantic partner. The baby needs to have close bond with the family that surrounds them to receive the best support and care.

Esteem - Empowering babies to repeat behaviours and to reach further to grasp the object they want and acknowledging the actions will empower the baby as they see the adult as a role model and trusted person in their life. Empowering the infants good behaviour and small achievements will allow them to develop high self esteem and aim to achieve new goals and reach developmental milestones. (The Peak Performance Center 2022)

Self Actualisation - The final sector of the triangle is self actualization. This allows the baby or infant to find humour and joy in different situations and feel relaxed and happy to be themselves and not embarrassed or ashamed.

The needs on the lower sectors need to be met before self actualization can be achieved with the support and guidance from practitioners, parents, families, agencies and caregivers.

Enabling Adults, Environments and Experiences



Enabling Adults

Adults need to ensure they are providing opportunities for the Babies And infants to explore their environment and the resources around them, the adults need to provide a joyful approach to the learning that will occur in an early years care settings. Practitioners need to ensure that the environment is suitable for the use of everyone and meets the needs of all members of the setting including the child. The practitioner needs to be caring and looking out to get the needs of the individual children in the child care facility (Essex County Council 2022) . The Enabling adult needs to be responsive to the children and their needs and their opinions to allow the child to feel appreciated and loved. This feeling of love is professional care and a method of trust within child care facilities (Holy Cross Facilities 2020). Adults in the baby and/or infants life need to ensure they provide the resources to enrich the learning both in the home and childcare facilities for multi sensory experiences, a task that can be used and an example is treasure basket including everyday objects that range in different materials for the baby or infant to explore safely.

Enabling Environments

Environments in the early years need to be stimulating and safe for the babies and children that will be using and exploring it. The environment is not only limited to the resources and the are that is in use its also the staff and people that are apart of it. Practitioners need to ensure they are creating a warm and welcoming environment for the children and their families to join and become a part of and It will become a healthy working partnership at both the Childs home and education or care facility (Early Years Alliance 2019). The environment where Babies and infants will grow and explore in. This environment needs to be made the individuals feel emotionally safe and secure and allow

people of all backgrounds to feel welcome by highlighting the importance of diversity and equality (Early Years Matters 2022). The outdoor environment is sensory rich and fits in with all areas of the Child's development. The outdoor environment is considered holistic as it has beneficial factors that will influence the baby or infant's physical development, cognitive/intellectual, language, social and emotional development. Activities should be adapted to take place in the outside environment to allow there to be further development in all areas of the Child's development (Early Years Matters 2022).

Enabling Experiences

Adults need to support and direct children as they navigate their way through the world of learning and stages of development. Enabling experiences allow the child to progress areas of development further from the opportunity to ask questions and be inquisitive towards new situations and information that is being displayed or provided by a professional (Nursery World 2017). Parents can enable experiences for babies within the home by including treasure basket time including natural resources found around the home as it can be stimulating for the baby to play with and can promote memory and recognition as they grow and develop. Encouraging babies to take risks and push themselves to new levels of development is an adult's role to make sure the transition is smooth, supported and encouraged. Activities planned by adults for infants and babies should be:

- **Hands on** (allows sensory and communication)
- **Purposeful** - targets areas of development and supports children's skills.
- **Uninterrupted** - play and learning takes time and babies and infants shouldn't be rushed as they are only beginning to map out the world.
- **Promote problem solving** - Cognitive development and critical thinking.
- **Expressive** - allows the children to talk about their feelings and learn about emotions.
- **Multi sensory** - to promote fine motor skills and gross motor development.

Emmi Pikler, The Pikler Method and the Pikler Principles

Emmi Pikler was born in 1902 and died in 1984. She was a children's educator that also ran an orphanage. Emmi Pikler had views on how to raise children and began to implement her beliefs into her orphanage. Her techniques of raising children was a method of being respectful towards their natural rate of development and not putting children in a position that they have not put themselves into before. The study that her approach underwent shows the benefits her method was being to the children's development and the children's mental wellbeing as they were being respected and trusting of the adults in the settings. Emmi Pikler's method allows babies and infants to have enabled experiences with adults which the child has invited themselves and is not being pressured or instructed. The Pikler method has the adults focusing on the Child's abilities and not pressuring or teaching them new things, the method isn't putting the child in unknown positions. The Emmi Pikler method has adults in the baby or infant's life carrying out activities 'with' the infant or baby not the adult doing it 'to or for' allowing the child to be a part of every part of their developmental day and the choices they make (Ette Tete 2022).

Benefits Of the Emmi Pikler Method

The Emmi Pikler method takes into account the needs and rate of the development the child can already achieve on their own natural development time rate without the support and pressure from adults the infant is considered as a participant in their development and growth. The pickler method allows the baby or infant to partake in their own directed play that will be uninterrupted and will allow the infants to develop their personalities and levels of trust within practitioners as a result of a respectful approach to care and learning (Ette Tete 2022).

Pikler Principles

- **Full Attention** - When engaging with the baby or infant it is important that their full attention is on them and the parent or caregiver is not distracted or preoccupied with other tasks at hand. Babies and infants require a parents or carers attention for the most part of the beginning of their lives as they are dependent on them to survive.
- **Trust** - Relationships between the adults in the household or the child care setting and the baby, infant or child it is important for there to be a trust and a bond between both. Adults need to approach the infants with respect and listen to their views and opinions to allow the child to feel appreciated and valued. The partnership between both child and adult can also use daily tasks and an opportunity to bond and strengthen relationships.
- **Slow** - Children. are evaluating the world daily and having new experiences and constantly processing new information. It is important that childcare practitioners take their time when communicating and having patience when carrying out nappy changing or feeding.
- **Uninterrupted** - Play in the childcare setting especially with babies should not be interrupted because the child is absorbing more information when engaging with objects as appeared to being purposely stimulated by an adult. Uninterrupted playtime also allows the baby to explore their levels of independence and problem solving on their own which will progress with the Childs self esteem.
- **Tuned in** - Care practitioners need to listen to what the infant may be trying to communicate to them. Practitioners need to keep an eye out for cues that a baby will send them as an indicator for their needs and what has been met and what hasn't. If a baby does not want anymore milk they will send a cue of pulling their head away from the bottle to show they do not want anymore.
- **'With' not 'to'** - Both the adult and the baby will carry out everyday task together. Participating in tasks together will boost the babies self esteem and confidences when performing similar task in their later life.
- **Babies are never put into a position or situation they cannot get into on their own** - The babies will learn how to overcome these obstacles on there own time using their natural development Time frame. the baby will practice getting into these positions when they have personally decided that they can achieve it and they can gain the skills of patience, problem solving and determination to achieve their own personal goal of new physical motor movements. Practitioners must not progress children's development as their bodies and muscles may not be prepared for the movement and may injure the child and make them uncomfortable, overwhelmed and stressed as a result of being pushed to develop.

(Ette Tete 2022) (Oskar's wooden ark 2022)

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