



First 1000 Days

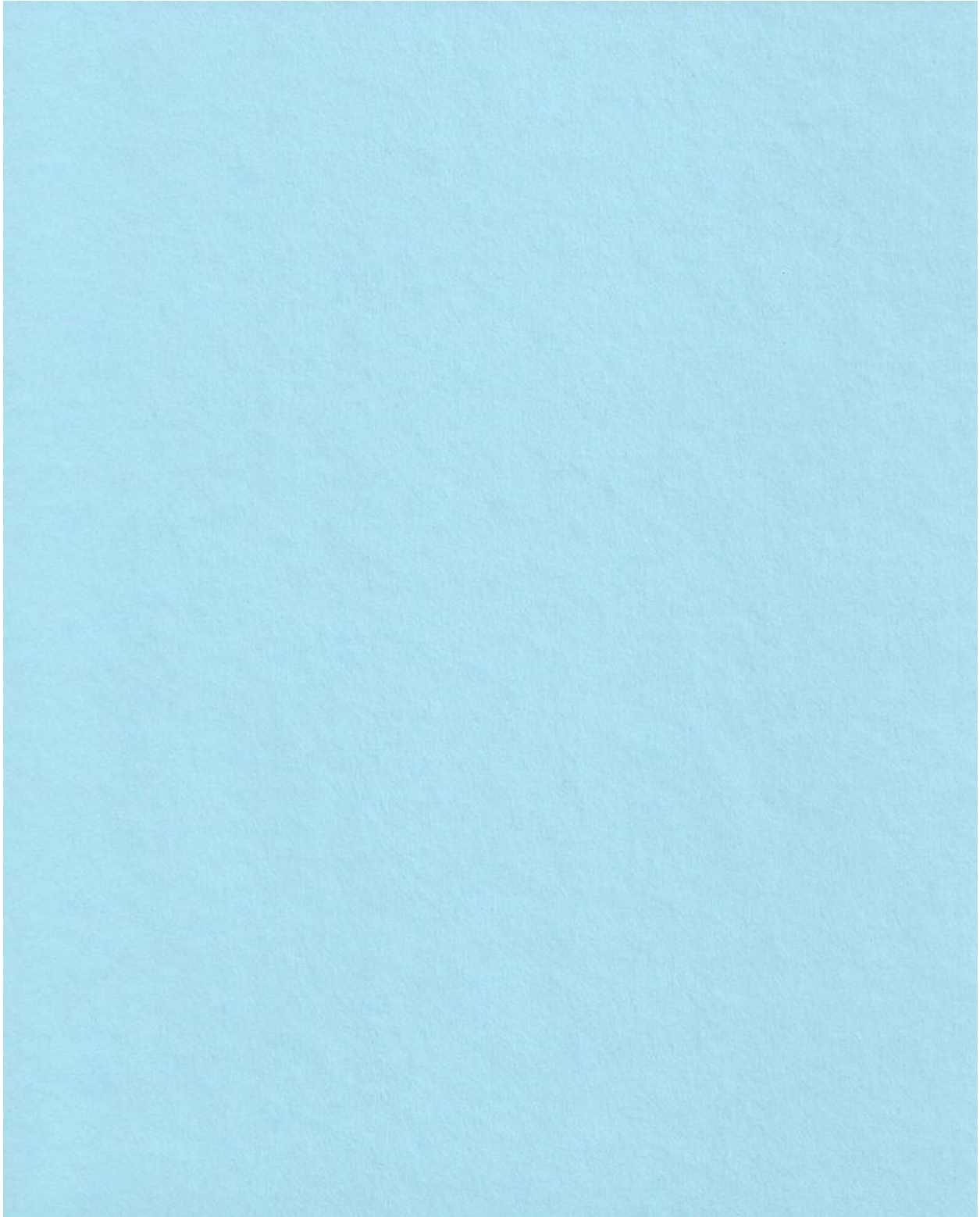
createchange.dgmt (2016)

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Introduction



During the HM Government (2021) review of the Early Years' Healthy Development, there was a focus on the first 1001 critical days from conception through to the age of 2 years. The review looked at the importance of this developmental stage and how these foundations can be critical throughout a lifetime. An infant is reliant on the adults around, therefore, an inclusive supportive network can give an infant the best start.

In this portfolio we will look at:

- Ways to support expecting mums.
- Explanation's as to why mum needs to look after herself.
- Brain Development
- Attachments
- Piklar Approach
- Interactions and interventions
- How the curriculum enables development in Te Whariki and in Wales.
- Enabling Pathways and outdoors
- Conclusion
- References



Support

Whilst pregnant there are many professionals to guide and support expecting parents. This is called antenatal care, according to the NHS (2020a) website there are many appointments to attend ranging from ultrasound scan's, screening tests to just conversations with the midwife assigned to you. These are all vital appointments to ensure the health and well-being of mum and baby. A Doctor or a local family centre can also offer support and guidance for expecting parents.

In Russia it depends on where you live. The law states equality however, the care and financial support available to a person living in Moscow is of similar standard to the UK. A person living in Siberia has very few appointments with local hospital and very little financial support suggests Gradvski, *et al*, (2020).



2 - Gray, (2010)

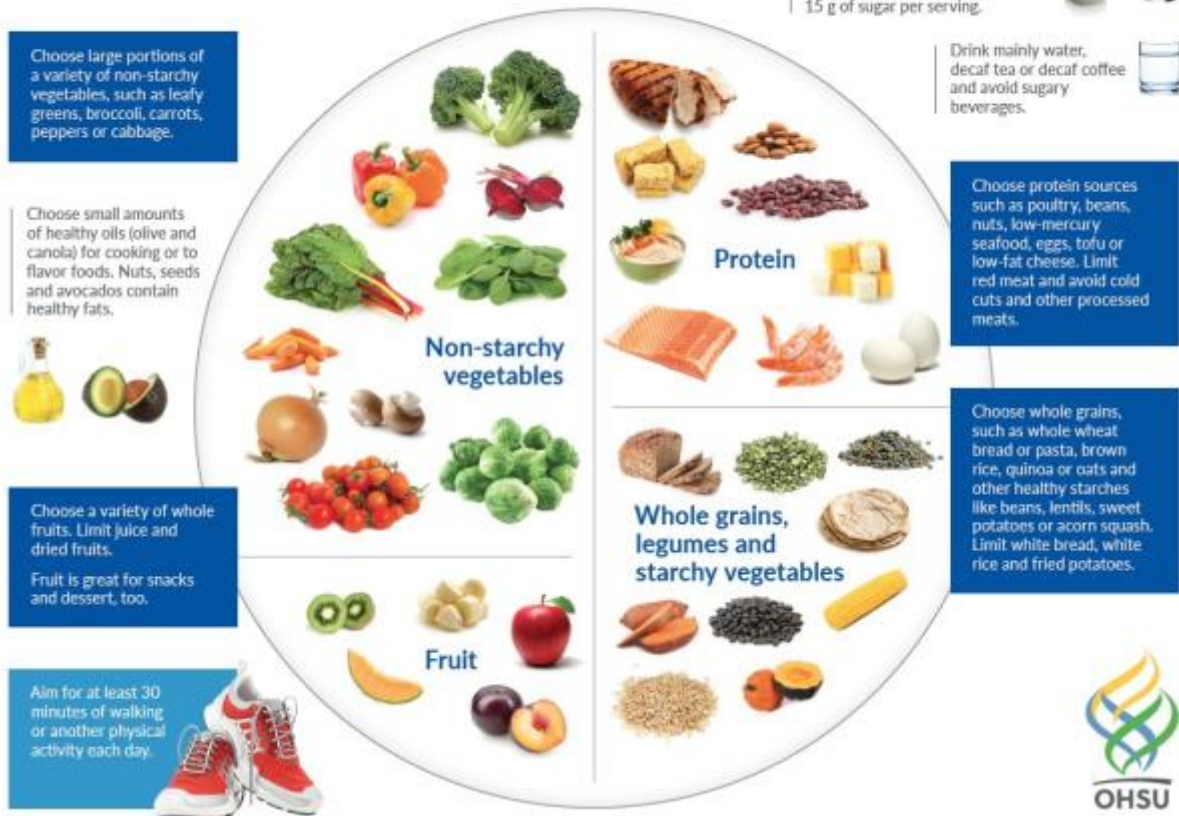
Emotions

Field, (2007) looks at studies carried out over the years regarding the evolution of a human and how the health and well-being of mum plays a vital part.

Feeling like you are on an emotional rollercoaster whilst pregnant can be normal. This change to your life can give feelings of happiness as well as worry. Worry over the well-being of foetus, the birth,

parenting skills, financial support and the change you are going through, will have minimal impact on the foetus when managed correctly. However, high levels of stress, depression and anxiety are not normal and can release stress hormones to foetus, increasing activity and can result in developmental and growth set backs. NHSinform, (2020) recommend that talking helps, going for a walk with someone is good exercise and good for mental health, a conversation out in the fresh air can make a whole lot of difference and as a general rule, if you can not walk and talk you need to slow down.

My Pregnancy Plate



3 - Openoregon. (n.d.)

Nutrition

Eating healthy meals regular is vital for mum and foetus growth and development.

Lee, *et al* (2016) carried out a web-based questionnaire in Australia to find out if expecting parents were well informed about nutrition in pregnancy. 114 responses were used and only 2% scored 80% or higher. Even though some were aware that they needed to:

take of folic acid, they were not fully aware that they only needed to take 0.8mg everyday until the 12th week of pregnancy (and 4 weeks before pregnancy).

increase Iodine, however, unaware of food source,

increase fruit and vegetable intake, but were not fully aware of the benefits, sources of minerals, vitamins, and fibre to help with digestion.

Many were not fully informed and had to find their limited information from the internet.

NHS (2020c) The initial appointments with the midwife are when discussions happen regarding expecting parents to have a healthy pregnancy, information about healthy eating and exercising is provided, which is all very necessary information to protect and ensure the health and well-being of mum and the foetus. There are regular checks on the weight of mum, however, this information tells us that MORE needs to be done to educate expecting parents, as dietary requirement can change throughout the pregnancy and play a vital role in the health, well-being and development of the foetus. Practitioners can look to hold nutrition classes in family centres. According to Gerhard, (2014) Nutrition knowledge in pregnancy is poor and believes that it has a major impact on obesity problems. If they foetus is not having the minerals and vitamins required from a healthy diet they start to adapt to what they are having, this can then lead to health and weight problems as the infant has adapted to sugary unhealthy food. For more [Healthy eating](#) guidance, please click on the link.



4 - Sportsandsocial. (2009)

Resting

Resting. Field, (2007), carried out a study on pregnant women who were depressed. Massage therapy was suggested. 20 minutes twice a week by their partner, family or friend. After 16 weeks reduced levels of cortisol had been noticed which lowered the foetal activity giving better outcomes for the infant development when born.

The studies also suggests that the foetus can start to recognise familiar sounds enabling learning to start before birth. Early years practitioners in family centres can advise and support ways to move forward with this. Reading stories aloud, caressing bump, or singing can allow the foetus to recognise your voice, and, in turn can also be relaxing for both mum and foetus.

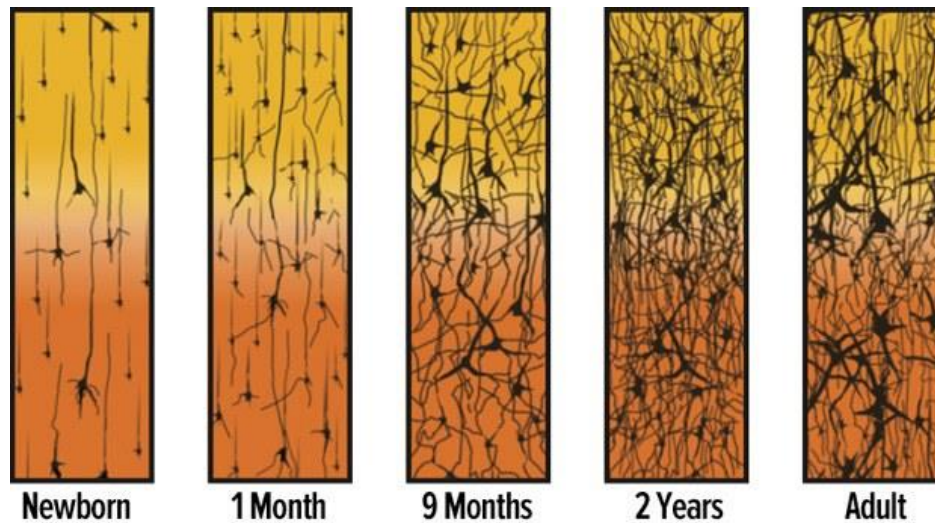


5 - global-geography.org. (2011)

Alcohol Abuse

Gerhardt, (2014) explains that the embryo and mum work together to make the placenta which supplies the embryo with Oxygen, nutrients, hormones, and acts as a defence from toxins when mum is leading a relatively healthy lifestyle. However, drugs and alcohol can be strenuous on the placenta leaving detrimental affect to a child's development.

Excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to facial disfigurement or affect brain development, whereby the size of the brain can be smaller or difficult for the right and left hand sides of the brain to connect, these are lifelong affects for the foetus, as well, insufficient growth and learning and behavioural problems. These conditions are referred to as (FAS) foetal alcohol syndrome. The NHS (2020b) website advises that even if you are trying to conceive you should not drink alcohol, the increased consumption will increase risk of FAS. The midwife, doctor or local pharmacist can support expecting parents with their concerns.



6 - OTRAEDUCACUION. (2010)

Brain Development

This image conveys the rapid growth of an infant's brain when all needs are met.

Thousanddays.org states that infant's brain throughout the first 1000 days is developing at a rapid pace. Just over halfway through the pregnancy, foetal brain consists of over 10 billion cells. It is with the nutrients required to assist this development. Lack of any could result in birth or brain impairment. Good sources of nutrients can be found in protein, calcium, folic acid, fruit and vegetables. As well as a healthy mum the foetus brain requires a happy mum, with as little stress as possible.

According to Gerhardt, (2014) the foetus adapts to knowledge gained from its surrounding, in preparation for the life ahead. This could be one of an enabling pathway. A supportive, encouraging adult, who has looked after themselves during pregnancy by eating healthily, exercising, maintaining good mental health and interacting with foetus regularly therefore, meeting the Maslow's Hierarchy of basic needs. Food, Water, Rest, Warmth, Love, Belonging and Security suggested by Happiness.com (2017), Thus allowing the foetus a strong start on their path to self-actualisation. To find out more tips on how to create an attachment with your [unborn baby](#) click here.

Whilst some have a different start. If their experience in the womb had been one of stress, depression, anxiety, unhealthy foods, drugs or alcohol abuse, they are in preparation for their needs not always being met if at all. However, as humans, when born we have the least adequate brain of all mammals, only quarter of its full size. Pathways start to form at a rapid pace and if favourable social experiences are met the pre-frontal cortex starts to grow. Therefore, if the responsible adult can connect and make a secure attachment with the infant the circumstances that this foetus had prepared for, can be changed to a positive one. Skin to skin is a very effective way to bring the infants cortisol levels down, according to unicef, (n.d.) website. After infant is born and dried they can be placed on the parents chest. This has a range of benefits, relaxing both parent and infant, regulating heartbeat, encourages breast feeding and helps mum's milk flow. It helps to develop a bond between the two and start to create a secure attachment.



7 - Iriss. (n.d.)

Attachments

This is initially formed with the primary care giver, mum usually. Life can be busy with an infant and mum has lots of things to do, when separated from mum they can get upset, mum returns and comforts infant. This can happen many times over the first couple of weeks, however, the infant will start to learn that mum will return, therefore, upset starts decrease, building a secure attachment with mum, which in turn enables the infant to use this skill in many areas as they develop. When starting a setting with early years practitioners, the infant can settle quicker, able to form attachments with engaging, dependable, caring, staff.

Long periods of disconnection from mum can leave the infant with attachment disorder, can feel a sense of grief and unsafe. Later developing strategies to avoid situations where these feelings may arise. They can become hostile, aggressive, or even withdrawn according to Macblain, (2014).

Play therapy by early years practitioners is a strategy used to support Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). Cranny, (2016) research paper shows some effectiveness of Play therapy when working inclusively with adults around the child.



8 - Familias en ruta. (2013).

Piklar Approach

When infant is born, the healthy diet and calming atmosphere needs to continue. The infant starts to move and feel, smell, see, taste and touch objects, which all send signals to the brain and the brain sends signals back to the sensory part of the body. Through experience we learn, developing the higher brain. Holistic, sensory experiences can make it easy for the brain to understand, when infant picks up something, they explore it, not only with their hands but they may put it in their mouths, move it around their body. This through time and experience can just be explored with their hands. With sensory experiences helps to coordinate your body and brain according to Robinson, (2008). Allowing infant to move and explore with their bodies is part of the Piklar Approach. Duncombe (2019) states that more children entering school with unsuitable and insufficient gross motor skills is very noticeable. This could be due to the age of game stations or lack of opportunity to move freely. Piklar institutes framework starts at birth and goes by the principals of having a good attachment and allowing infant to develop their fine and gross motor skills unaided. A secure attachment with allows them to feel safe and supported whilst discovering ways to move and develop independently. An enabling adult has to ensure the infant has an enabling environment. From birth the infant should be laid on their back, in a safe area, the soft floor or cot. Allowing them to move freely, hands and body, even during nappy changing, feeding and dressing. To enable this experience, you could give the baby something, either to hold or look at. This is developing their fine motor skills.

The infant should progress to rolling over onto their belly and back. Holding arms and legs in the air when on their back or belly, sometimes grabbing their legs or reaching out will build their core strength. Then laying on their side playing with objects, moving up onto their knees, then may crawl or sit up and eventually pulling themselves up to the standing position. Once confidence and strength are there the

infant will start to walk. Developing their gross motor skills. Piklar has done extensive research on this developmental process and does not recommend that infant is put into a position like tummy time or supported to sit or stand when they are not ready for that stage of development.



9 - Flickr.com (2011)

Interactions

HM Government, (2021) The best start for life framework suggests that in the first 1001 days, the infant does not have a voice and therefore, the responsible adult must speak for them. To identify the infant's needs, the adults responsible should be observing. This forms relationships and allows you to learn what the infant needs by their cry, coos, movement and overall facial expressions. As the infant grows, you are observing their ability and can then adapt the environment to enhance learning and development. To make relationships stronger, as well as observing, good interaction is required. This enables you to gain knowledge on their likes, dislikes, and can give you better understanding of their personality suggests Pennstate Extension, (2018). This is called attunement. Clare, (2016) research found in a nursery, they had a constant background noise of nurse rhymes, therefore, very little or no interacting was happening, the infant's looked solitary and incurious. Nursery rhymes can be helpful for development stages of engagement and pleasurable, when used appropriately, for short period of time. Something to think about in early years settings is the background noise. Whether it be loud overpowering voices, or relaxing music. No background noise is best for quality interaction.

Bronfenbrenner's theory where the infant is the central part, believes that the microsystem around the infant, which includes family, school, health services and other close interactions play a vital part in the

infant's development. Good interaction, attending to their needs, supportive and engaging, starts to develop social skills according to Macblain, (2014).

This video explains the affect that good interaction with an infant has on their future.

https://youtu.be/Dmz7UN_WZ_c What is Social - Emotional development?



10 - Quoi. (2021j).

Interventions

During observations and interaction with an infant can be a critical time to identify disability or development needs. In Wales expecting mothers are assigned to a midwife, this midwife will visit the expecting mum at home during the third trimester of pregnancy. The introduction of interventions will be discussed then, things like flying start or other interventions that could help mum. When the infant is born the health visitor then visits the home to check that mum and infant are doing well and that attachments and attunement are being formed, to give help and support where needed. If any concerns arise around the infant's development or ability, or even if there are concerns about mum, the health visitor or doctor can arrange help and support from multi-agencies. Flying start and the community midwifery health services will then take over the care of mum and baby if required according to Flying Start, (2017). If an infant has developmental or disability needs, which have been recognised by mum or the health visitor, they will arrive at a setting when they start with a care plan. Necessary training will be given to staff if required and a one to one support practitioner may be assigned depending on the needs.



11 - Caring & Sharing. (2015).

Curriculum for Non-maintained Settings

The Welsh Government (2021b) curriculum for non-maintained settings like nurse's is very similar to the Piklar approach, with a good attachment and professional, enabling adults the infant has the ability to develop at their own pace. A professional, enabling adults is a practitioner who has the knowledge and understanding of child development, and the ability to make attachments with infants by being caring, engaging, and supportive. The curriculum is a child-centred approach where the infant has a relaxed developmental process. The key principals are:

Belonging

Communication

Exploration

Physical Development

Well-being

Which should be addressed with a holistic approach underpinning the Welsh ethos of what the infant needs, what they are learning and how the adult can enhance the experience to promote the infants learning, this is the zone of proximal development.



12 - *TheProw.org.nz. (2020).*

Te Whariki

According to Gradovski, *et al*, (2020) In New Zealand their curriculum is inclusive from birth. 'Te Whariki' works under the principal of freedom, children learn and develop through play with an opportunity to discover themselves whilst learning independently. The belief that formal education is for later in a child's life. The framework is holistic and bicultural, English and what they believe to be as the Maori culture. The recognition of the first 100 days after birth is believed to be of rapid growth. The focus on a language rich environment, and the acknowledgement that during this period, an infant will learn better through one to one moments, which consists of serve and return communication between adult and infant. Working inclusively with the family is vital, as not all children can attend the settings.



13 - Image by Evans. (2022).

Enabling Environment



14 - Image by Evans. (2022).

Enabling Experience 1



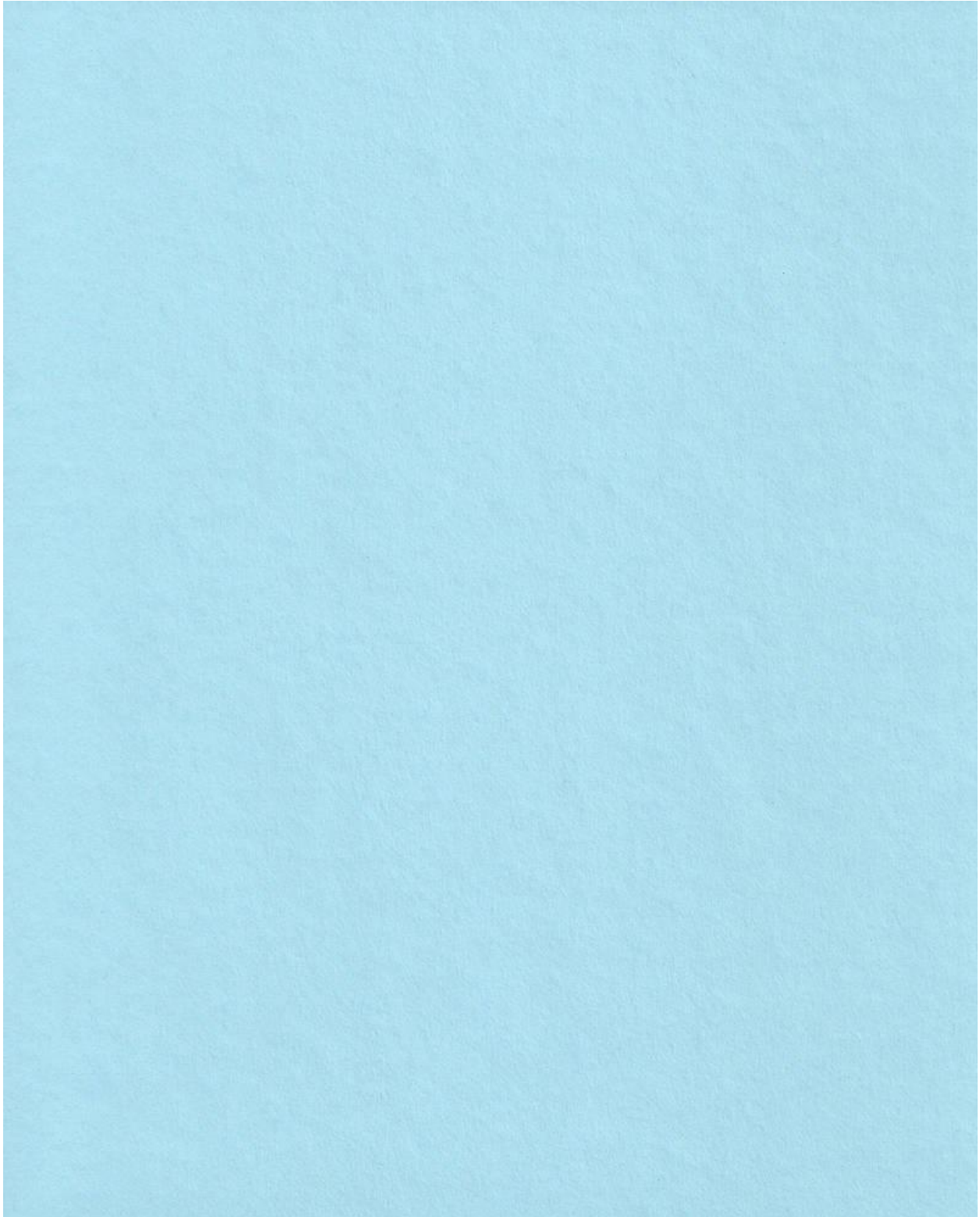
15 - Image by Evans. (2022).

Enabling Experience 2

Outdoor experiences.

Welsh Government, (2021a) guidance on enabling pathways is in order to support practitioner with the new curriculum for Wales, throughout this portfolio there are references to an enabling adult, an enabling environment and an enabling experience. Here are some pictures of what this could look like. The first picture is of a grassed area full of ice, its an enabling environment as they can explore, there is some element of danger as ice is slippery, however, an enabling adult can explain and allow the infants to manage their own risk, to enable the experience the infants can walk on the icy grass and with their foot prints they can make patterns and shapes. There are no reasons why an infant unable to walk or talk is unable to access the wonderful world that is outdoors. It can offer a sensory experience therefore, enhancing the cognitive development due to the experience being had from many areas of the body. Infant can wear appropriate clothing and appropriate mats can be placed on the grass area. It does not have to be a lengthy process; it is about the experience. The infant can either have natural objects to explore, move around or even just observe others, this can be the start in social development. The infant can experience the sounds, the feelings, the sights and the smells of the outdoors. They may start to love the outdoors giving them a chances of a health lifestyle according to Cobb, (n.d.).

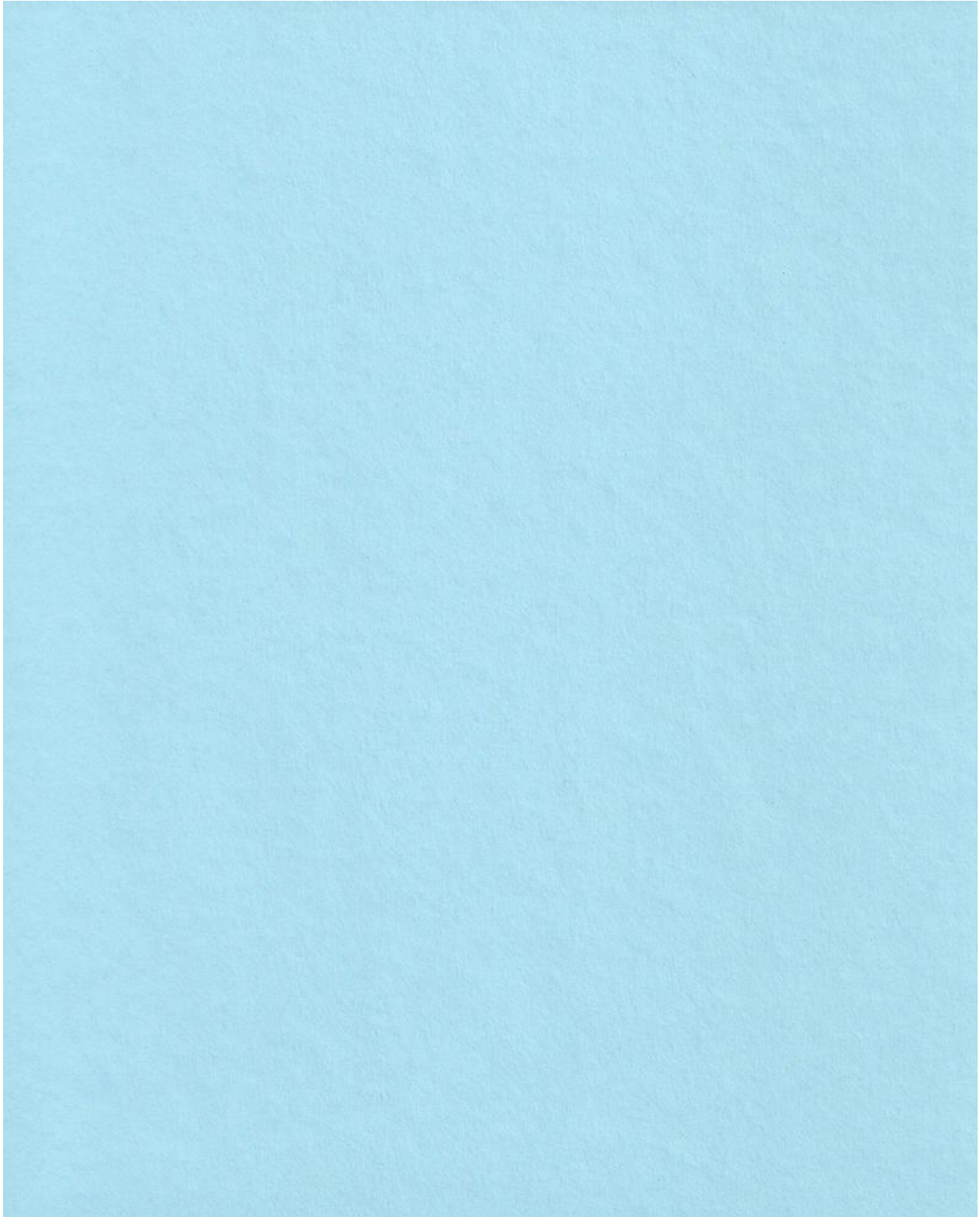
Conclusion



Nurture influences Nature. The first 1000 days is when the rapid pace of development is happening. The experiences had can shape the future. To develop to full potential you need support, secure attachment with one or more adults and a wide range of experiences. Stress, toxin abuse, neglect over a long period can have detrimental effect on an infant's development according to HM Government, (2021).

Throughout this portfolio we have discussed ways that an adult, whether it be parent, Health care professional, or an early year's practitioner enables an infant's development. Support, knowledge, care, attentiveness, and Love is needed. 'Professional Love' from an early year's practitioner can be a difficult subject. We have seen that an infant needs all the elements of love to support their development, however, some early year's practitioners still find the idea of it unclear, due to the convictions of child abuse to a little but increasing number of early year's practitioners, this research was carried out by The University of Sheffield, (2016).

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