

Blog Assignment

AI Declaration

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- According to the guidelines of my assignment can you help to plan a structure to follow for the blogs.
- Can you summarise this link to help me understand what it is telling me.

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.

Attachment and Emotional Development: Why early relationships shape lifelong wellbeing.

Today, this blog is going to be looking at Attachment and Emotional Development and look more into why Early Relationships shape lifelong wellbeing. Looking at The Children's Society website, they state that "1 in 6 children aged 5-16 are likely to have mental health problems" and they also state that "17 to 22 year old women are the group most at risk of developing a mental health problem". We are going to be looking into this further and seeing what can be done, from a young age to help prevent and prolong the possibility of these children developing mental health issues. I will be doing this by looking into Bowlby and Ainsworth's theories and what they have to say on the matter.

So what is emotional development? Emotional development is the way in which a child learns how to recognise the different emotions that people display and have the ability to understand what each emotion means. It is also the ability to regulate their own emotions with the example of calming down when they are feeling overwhelmed. (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, n.d). The way in which emotional development can be supported is by the early relationships that they form with childrens parents and caregivers. This is due to those early relationships helping to build a childs foundation for emotional regulation and security, sense of self and also their future social and mental wellbeing. (Department for Education, n.d.). According to the Department of Education, n.d., they state that the Early Years Foundation Stage has a requirement that every child needs to have a key person assigned to them which in a nursery or school setting the child would have their 'safe' person to go to and this person would be able to build a trusting relationship with the child and their family in order for them to feel more settled

in the school setting, which also helps to support the parents as the 'first educators'. This support from a young age helps to provide the connection, trust and emotional safety that children need to be able to grow up into successful adults, which makes it easier for them to cope with challenges throughout life. [Click the Link to see a relevant video on this section.....](#) (Department for Education, n.d.)

Bowlby's Theory

Lets look at the theorists linked with emotional development and attachment. The main two being John Bowlby and his Attachment theory and Mary Ainsworths Strange situation.

According to Highgate Counselling Centre (n.d.) they explain how Bowlby's main idea is that children are biologically wired to form very strong early attachments. This is why these early relationships that a child forms are essential. This source also states that Bowlby argued that attachment is 'innate' which simply means that babies are born with built in systems that help to keep them close to their main caregiver. He also stated that children had 'social releasers' that helped to trigger an adults caregiving responses. A child would do this by crying and smiling etc. Bowlby also mentioned how the first two years of a childs life is a critical period for forming this essential attachment.

Ainsworth's Strange Situation

Now lets look at Mary Ainsworths Strange Situation. The Strange Situation was an observation structured in a way that would reveal how securely or insecurely attached a child was to their caregiver. It was a standardised 8 step assessment that would activate the childs attachment system by causing them mild stress. These 8 steps included-

The mother and child are alone in the room.

The child is encouraged to explore.

A stranger enters the room and attempts to interact with the child.

The mother leaves the room – the child and stranger are now alone.

The mother returns and the stranger leaves.

The mother leaves again.

The stranger returns.

The mother returns again and the stranger exits. (Attachment Project, n.d.)

After these steps the observer would look at how the child reacted to the assessment and the reunion as it would show the attachment between the parent and child.

For this next section we will look at the typical attachment milestones of a child up to the age of 2+, this way we will be able to understand how and when attachment forms in a 'typical' baby. According to the NSPCC Learning (2021) there are 5 major attachment milestones that a baby would normally reach, these are:

- Before they are born- the bond with the parent begins as the parents would typically start to form an emotional bond with the baby before they are born, this helps them to prepare for responding to the babies needs once they have been delivered into this world.
- From birth to roughly six weeks of life- in this stage the baby is not ready to form an attachment with a specific person, they respond to any adult who meets their basic care needs, including feeding and comforting. This helps to prepare them for future attachments.
- Roughly six weeks to six to seven months- in this stage a baby begins to recognise familiar adults and start to show preferences. They are comforted easily by these caregivers but some would still accept comfort from a stranger.
- Roughly seven to nine months- this is the stage where the child shows a stronger attachment to one main caregiver and also would start to develop separation anxiety when they leave and develop stranger anxiety.
- From nine months onwards- this is where once a child has formed their main attachment with one caregiver they would start to form additional attachments with other family members and caregivers, this is where their resilience starts to build.

To conclude early relationships that a child experiences will have a massive effect on their lifelong wellbeing as if for example a child doesn't bond with their main caregiver, it could lead to issues with future emotional relationships. It is important for a child to experience safety, comfort and emotional comfort from day one as this helps them to be able to regulate their emotions and as Ainsworth studies show the strong attachment that forms between baby and their safe person.

Nutrition and Physical Development: How early diet influences Growth, health and Learning

For this blog we are going to be looking at Nutrition and Physical Development and also how early diet can have an influence on growth, health and learning throughout a child's life. According to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2024), they have done studies that state that there are 1 in 3 children that end up leaving primary school

overweight or living with obesity, which shows how common it is for primary ages children to become overweight whilst moving through the years in primary school. They also state that the obesity rates are lower for the younger children aged around 4-5 years old. This blog will be looking into the effects that this has on children and their lives and the effects that it has on their physical development.

Now lets look into what physical development is. Early Movers (n.d.) explains that physical development is the strengthening and coordination of a child's muscles, balance, posture and movement. This helps them to learn the ability to be independant as they become more able to dress themselves, move more confidently and interacting with other children and adults. This shows that physical development is more than just a child gaining muscle and being able to pick something up that is slightly heavy, it means that they would grow up to become more confident individuals and have more awareness of their bodies.

Gesell's Maturation Theory

Gesell's Maturation Theory looks at the idea that children develop according to their inner biological timetable which means that the growth that they go through happens in a predictable and sequential way and is done mainly due to genetics rather than outside sources. It also points out that all children follow the same developmental pattern but at their own pace. (Gesell Program in Early Childhood, n.d.). Gesell's theory does not account for children who have additional needs and possibly any genetic conditions which slows or stunts their development.

Piaget's Theory

Now Piaget's theory challenges the likes of Gesell as he states that children construct their own knowledge by the child's interaction with the outside world and the factors that it brings. (DeWolfe, 2024). Piaget researched the four stages of Cognitive development as the first being the Sensorimotor stage which was 0-2 years old. This was where babies learn through their senses and actions that are taken. They eventually develop object permanence which is where they realise that something still exists after they can't see it anymore. The next stage is the preoperational stage which is 2-7 years. This stage consists of children being able to use symbols, language and imaginative play but don't understand logic. The third stage being concrete operational 7-11 years old. Which is where thinking starts to become more logical for children and they start to become less egocentric. The fourth and final stage is the formal operational stage which is 11+, this is where children/teenagers start to be able to think in an abstract way and be able to engage in problem solving.

After looking at what the theorists have to say, I am now going to look at what effects early nutrition has on a child's growth and development. According to Prendergast and Humphrey

(2014) nutrition helps to shape a child's growth by having an influence on the major systems that are involved in the physical, cognitive and immune development. They also state that having a balanced nutritional diet from pregnancy throughout the early years massively shapes their lifelong development. It is shown that nutrition directly influences a child's physical development. Its effects:

- Linear growth and height
- Muscle and bone development
- Body composition
- Organ development.

This means that there are influencing factors that could hinder with a child's nutritional intake. These being poverty, if the parents haven't got access to healthier foods, cultural food practises, if a religion requires you to eat certain foods and not others, parental knowledge, if parents aren't aware of how to deal with healthier foods and also aren't able to home cook as much and finally chronic illnesses, whether this is the parent or the child. If the parent is the one that has the chronic illness, they might not have the ability to cook.

What role can practitioners and Early years providers do to help children nutritionally? The Department for Education (n.d.) state that early years providers must follow the new guidance on nutrition as early eating habits help to shape lifelong health. They state that good nutrition in the earlier years has a massive impact on their brain development, helps children to be able to regulate their appetite, massively reduces the risks of a child developing obesity and also helps to promote wellbeing and a keen readiness to learn about food and the benefits. From looking at this website we can see the importance of practitioner implementing this early as having poor nutrition can promote health inequalities through the child's life. They play an important role as often they are able to support the families as well as just the children. An example would be that if a family is of a lower income they may not be able to afford the healthier foods but with the continuing support from practitioners they would be able to learn the importance of healthy food and also how to possibly manage money so that they could start introducing these healthier foods at home also.

What are the government doing to help children gain access to nutritional foods? Hartgen-Walker and Lally (2023) explains that children having access to free school meals means that they would be getting at least one healthy balanced meal a day that some children would not get otherwise. These school meals have to meet the School Food Standard that requires enough fruit and vegetables, limited sugar, salt and fat and also a balanced portion of protein, carbohydrates and dairy. They also explain that many low income families could end up

spending nearly 50% of their disposable income to be able to meet the Eatwell Guides standards which is what we looked at previously.

After looking at what physical development is and what the theorists have to say we can see the major importance that a good diet can play on a child's life. We can also see the good work that practitioners are putting in to make sure that children are having a fair and equal start to life nutritionally. Though there is more work and adjustments needed in the future there is a good amount of work happening to help these children.

Language Development in the Early years : The role of Interaction, Environment and Policy

For this last blog we are going to be looking at how language develops in the early years and how interaction, environment and policy has an impact on the development. According to Speech and Language UK (2025) around 30% of children that have SEND have difficulties in understanding words and talking. They also state that speech and language challenges are quite often missing from the SEND reform discussions, despite the percentage being so high. From looking at this we can see that language development is massively important and should be heavily supported by parents, schools and practitioners in order for children to have the best chance of understanding and being able to communicate.

So what is language development? Language development is the process in which a child begins to understand language and use spoken language, ranging from babbling to fully forming words and eventually sentences (Main,2022). It processes through predictable stages and it is developed by cognitive growth, a child's social interactions and their exposure to language. The stages differ from child to child and also if they have a SEND diagnosis of certain types which could cause delays.

Lev Vygotsky

Let's look at the theorists. I am going to be looking at Lev Vygotsky and Noam Chomsky and compare the two theories. Vygotsky's social interaction theory believed that children's minds and thinking is shaped by the social interactions that they receive, the cultural tools around them and the continued guided support from people more knowledgeable than themselves (Explore Psychology, 2024). There were three main concepts that helped to make up Vygotsky's theory. These were the Zone of Proximal Development which was the difference between what a child was able to do on their own and what they are able to do with the support from others. He believed that children learn best when the tasks being undertaken are challenging but also achievable with continued support. The next one being Scaffolding, which was the support given to a child while they are moving through the Zone of Proximal Development and as they

are achieving more the support is slowly taken away. The last concept was that cultural tools and language helped a child and changed how children think and solve problems (Explore Psychology, 2024).

Noam Chomsky

According to Early Years TV (n.d.) Chomsky believed that children are born programmed to learn languages. He shows how children are born with a Language Acquisition Device which means that they are born able to understand patterns in speech and generate sentences that they have not heard previously. Chomsky also showed that children are born with a set of 'universal rules' which enables them to understand whatever language it is that they are brought up with and exposed to. This shows how different Vygotsky and Chomsky's theories are as one believes that children have to be in an environment where they are able to learn their language skills from outside sources where as the other believes that children are hardwired to understand language from birth.

So what factors have an influence on the language development of a child? According to CareLearning (n.d.) they state that there are a few different factors that influence a child's ability to learn language, some of these being, hearing impairments would have an effect on how a child is able to learn words and hear sounds. Certain developmental conditions such as autism, down syndrome and other additional learning needs would effect how they can process and copy language. Another factor would be, not being exposed to language as much as other children could lead to delays.

Now what can be done to support children's language development? The main strategies that practitioners follow in early years settings are:

- Making and supporting a language rich environment for the children to learn from. This could include songs, poems and very word rich games.
- Using play to deepen understanding of language by using props and encouraging imaginative play.
- They can model language by explaining to the children what they are doing or playing with to help them link words and sentences.
- Also supporting multilingual learners by using photos, simple words and routines to help them learn a language. (Department of Education, 2022)

[Click the link to see examples of these points.....](#)

To conclude we can see by looking at the statistics how important and essential early language support is for all ranges of children especially those with additional learning needs. They way in

which the development would take place the best is if practitioners work closely with the parents providing continuous support and advice so that the children are able to thrive.

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