ECEY4005

The first 1000 days
Digital scrap book

ECEY4005

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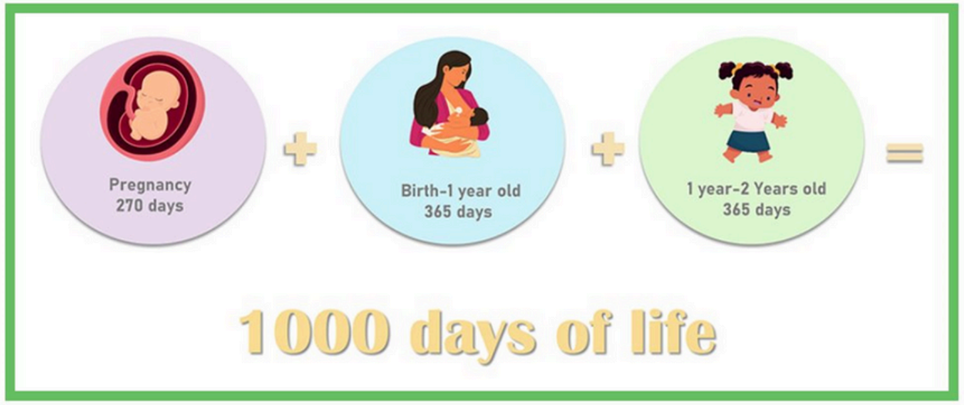
ECEY4005

THE FIRST 1000 DAYS





What is the first 1000 days?
Why are they important?



First 1000 days of life (2024)

According to HM Government (2021), the period from the time of conception to the child's second birthday is known as the first 1000 days. This period is crucial for their cognitive, emotional and physical development. Correspondingly, Australia (2021) states their immune system, body, and brain undergo substantial growth and development during this time. Pregnancy and post-birth factors significantly influence a mother's health, diet and stress levels, while a baby's physical surroundings and diet also significantly impact their health and well-being.

Schwarzenberg and Georgieff (2018) suggest that primary brain structures, including sensory systems, learning, memory and myelination, develop rapidly in the first 1000 days, with 90% of a child's brain expected to develop by age five. Gonçalves, Arnez, and Paula-Silva (2024) state pregnancy is a critical period for a baby's rapid growth, development of vital organs and structures and the rapid division of cells, which can be influenced by disruptions. Furthermore, Alliance *et al.* (2018) suggest that early childhood experiences significantly impact a child's growth and health, as the brain undergoes maximum developmental change, allowing for quick adaptation to new information.

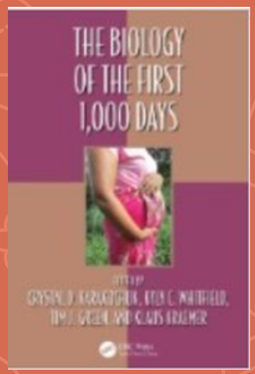
Karakochuk *et al.* (2018) highlight the importance of nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life for growth and development. Exposure to nutritious, environmental and hormonal factors can lead to adverse health consequences. Lack of nutrition can have severe effects on cognition and developmental processes. Ensuring dietary needs during this time can maximize growth, prevent child mortality and help children achieve their full potential.





Further reading

https://research-ebsco-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/linkprocessor/plink?id=14382aa2-f596-39c6-95a2-56fcca4220a8









What is the first 1000 days? Why are they important?

Martorell (2017, cited in Bust & Pedro, 2020) points out malnutrition during the first 1000 days of life is particularly harmful due to rapid growth and development during pregnancy and infancy. This period is linked to physical, muscle, brain, cognitive, social, emotional, adjustment, risk-taking behavior, earning capacity and a host of other health-related issues have all been demonstrated to be associated with the nutrition that mothers and babies receive during the first 1000 days of life.

Yates (2015) highlights the first 1000 days of life establish the fundamentals of development, the representation of life and the window of opportunity for the child's future. This window is crucial for a child's development, with the first two years being the most peaks. This period also marks the beginning of visual, auditory and language development, as well as strong relationships and attachments.

Further information



Yates (2015) ("Do the First 1000 Days Determine the Rest of Your Life? | DeeDee Yates | TEDxWindhoek")

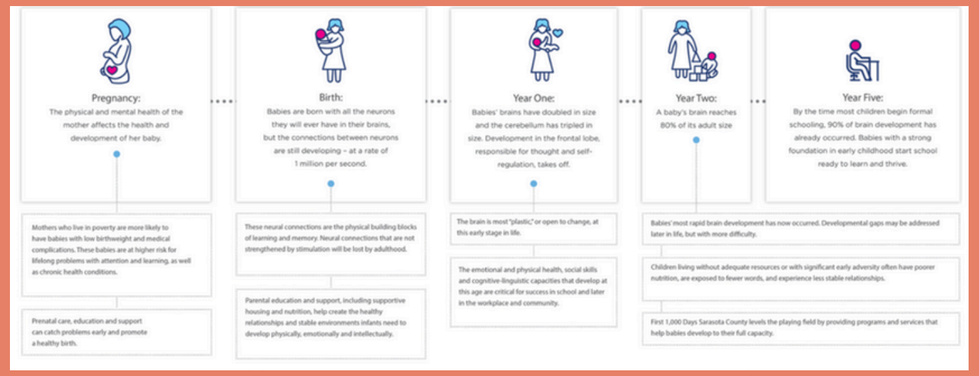
Links to Maslow

Alliance *et al.* (2018) suggest that Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which outlines the basic requirements for children to thrive, is relevant to the first 1000 days of development, aiming to maximize a child's cognitive potential and getting all needs being met even in early development before birth.

Research

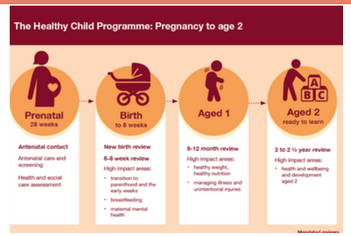
According to research, van Zyl and van Wyk (2021) state the Western Cape government launched the "Right Start Bright Future" campaign in 2016 to highlight the importance of the first 1000 days of life. The campaign focuses on three key areas: play, stimulation, love, attention, and health and nutrition, crucial for children's development.

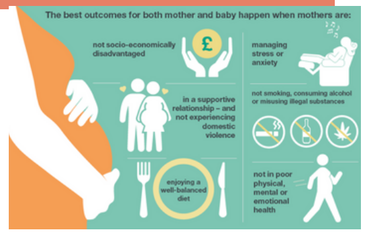
What to do in the first 1000 days?



First 1,000 Days Suncoast (2014)







Public Health England (2016)

Further information

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-giving-every-child-the-best-start-in-life/health-matters-giving-every-child-the-best-start-in-life



UNICEF Philippines (2015)
("The First 1,000 Days of Life")

Further Research

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7967291/#:~:text=The%20significance%20of%20the%20first,lives%20and%20future%20of%20children.

UNICEF (2015) identifies three critical stages in a child's life: pregnancy, infancy and childhood. During pregnancy, nutrition is crucial, with prenatal care, supplements and a balanced diet. Infancy provides colostrum, vaccinations and semi-solid meals. Following these guidelines leads to healthier lives and higher IQ. UNICEF (2017) research highlights the significance of good nutrition and breastfeeding in South Africa, with breastfeeding resulting in 14 times higher survival rates and healthier families, yet over 40% of children lack vaccinations in these countries.

Australia (2021) emphasizes the importance of a healthy diet, strong relationships security and a safe environment for a baby's first 1,000 days of life. Likewise, HM Government (2021) maintains the importance of healthy nutrition, language development, emotional resilience, attachment and strong relationships during the infancy to toddler stage, promoting cognitive and physical growth.
NHS Wales (2023) emphasize the importance of pre-natal care in the first 1000 days of pregnancy, including support classes, lifestyle classes, emotional or childbirth support and general pregnancy appointments.







Caregivers

What is exceptional caregiving?

What do children need for the best start in life?

In line with holistic growth, Brodie (2018) states exceptional care allows a child to develop holistically. The holistic approach improves a child's ability to learn and solve problems in their future and helps children regulate their emotions and build healthy relationships reducing the likelihood of health problems such as stress, anxiety and developmental delays.

NHS Wales (2023) emphasizes the importance of early childhood educators, parents and healthcare professionals in shaping children's experiences and interactions during their first 1000 days of life. Holistic parenting is linked to better learning, health and wellness, as early events influence brain development.

Likewise, Harvard University's Centre for the Developing Child (2016, cited in NHS Wales 2023) state early events significantly impact developing brains, with the first 1000 days accelerating growth and laying the foundation for future learning, health and well-being, significantly influenced by parenting and exceptional caregiving.

Furthermore, Capitani *et al.* (2023) state newborn babies' neurons are already present in their brains by age two, with interactions with caregivers forming numerous neural connections. Proper care in early years can help establish the groundwork for long-lasting health and wellbeing, preventing academic struggles and affecting families and communities' prosperity enabling a sense of belonging and acceptance.

What is exceptional caregiving?
What do children need for the best start in life?

Parents

NHS Wales (2023) emphasizes the importance of a child's health and basic needs, highlighting the need for strong relationships, play, education, and engagement. Responsive interaction between infants and adults promotes mental health and brain development. Proper diet, care, and medical attention are crucial for physical and mental health. Nurturing parent-child relationships prevents harm and provides regular boundaries, emotional support, and routines. Moreover, Harvard University's Centre on the Developing child (2024) explain interactions between infants and adults are crucial for brain architecture, promoting early social and language skills, which lay the groundwork for later cognitive development, this could be touch, facial expression or eye contact. Furthermore, HM Government (2021) emphasizes the importance of emotional, physical and mental health support during pregnancy and post-birth, including healthcare providers, parenting classes, midwife appointments, nutritional classes and date immunizations. Resulting in the "Best start in life programme" for parents to access.

According to Sullivan *et al.* (2011), the mother's level of care impacts the infant's emotional and cognitive development, therefore this care must be established while the baby is in the womb. The infant's first sign of attachment is a response to the mother's voice and aroma. According to Flaherty and Sadler (2010) and Main (2023), Bowlby attachment theory proposes fundamental attachment bonds between parent/career and infant, which promote a safe basis for investigation. Newborns who are securely connected have better long-term outcomes than those who are insecurely attached. carers consistency, emotional availability, and responsiveness all influence attachment development.



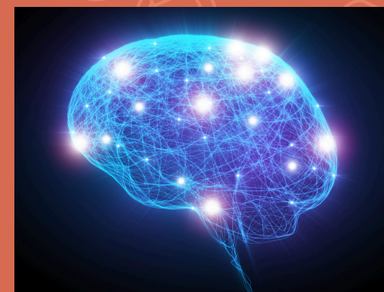
Further reading on the best start in life programme

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605c5e61d3bf7f2f0d94183a/The_best_start_for_life_a_vision_for_the_1_001_critical_days.pdf



(TED,2021) Molly Wright: How Every Child Can Thrive by Five





What is exceptional caregiving?
What do children need for the best start in life?

Finnegan *et al.* (2016) maintains research indicates that a child's early experiences and surroundings significantly impact how their brain develops and refers to the part parents play in fostering a positive learning atmosphere at home. Offering the experiences and surroundings that a child requires for the growth of their brains and language abilities (Sylva *et al.*, 2004, cited in Finnegan *et al.*, 2016). This could involve reading a lot of books, having opportunities learning rhymes and singing songs.

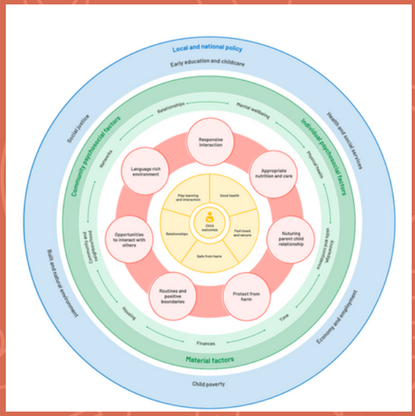
According to studies, these early activities have a good impact on children's education for the rest of their life. The freedom of movement and the opportunity to explore and use imagination. Welsh Government (no date) establish a inclusive learning environment, with strong relationships. Focusing on five pathways that prioritize a child's needs. These pathways will enable professionals to support and model each child's needs, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. They will also provide opportunities for imaginative and creative activities while encouraging independence.

The statement is supported by Reggio Children (no date), when discussing the Reggio Emilio philosophy which places the child at the core of the learning process. The method sees children as inquisitive, capable and informed, where they can learn from the environment around them. It also lets children be independent learners so they can explore and use curiosity and imagination. The importance of observing and assessing the child to best support their learning and the solid relationships in their environment.

Kinaesthesia is established within 1000 days, promoting natural development and motor skills in babies through sensory encounters, laying the groundwork for lifetime abilities in movement and coordination (Smith (2020). This can be maintained with regular health checks, observation free play and freedom to move.



Welsh Government (n.d)



NHS Wales (2023)

Challenges

What are the challenges in providing high quality care?

According to Indrio *et al.* (2023), the first 1000 days provide the foundations for a child's physical, emotional, social and psychological development, which can be altered by challenges and barriers encountered during the first 1000 days of life.

Health issues and Nutrition

Indrio *et al.* (2023) highlight the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle to reduce infertility and miscarriage rates, especially for mothers who are vegan, vegetarian, or adhere to certain cultural beliefs, as their diet may not provide sufficient vitamins, protein, and trace elements , the encouragment of using folic acid and proper vitamin supplementation.

Cleveland Clinic (2022) claims there are many health issues and risks during pregnancy such as diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and anxiety that needs to also be monitored by healthcare professionals during pregnancy to decrease serious harm to mother and baby.

Indrio *et al.* (2023) discuss the need of a balanced diet and the importance of weight management, ensuring that the mother is of healthy weight and that the necessary vitamins are being used. This will decrease the chances of the child developing any unnecessary health conditions and give the best start.

Attendance of appointments such prenatal scans is also essential, however, Gamberini, Angeli and Ambrosino (2022) state that such beliefs, cultures norms and poverty can hinder a mother from attending these appointments.







Challenges

What are the challenges in providing high quality care?

Poverty and lifestyle

Furthermore, House of Commons (2019) maintains Poverty, bad housing, and unpredictable employment can hinder parents' ability to provide a safe, healthy environment for their children. Pregnant mothers may not receive adequate attention and nutrition. Physical and emotional health, relationships, parenting style, and cultural beliefs such as immunisations and diet can impact a child's development during the first 1000 days.

Moreover, (NIH, 2018) claims that lifestyle choice of the mother such as subsense muses can cause effects such as stillbirth or fetal syndrome and cause long term effects on the child or even an unsafe and unnurtured environment.

Adversity negatively impacts young children's psychological and neurological development, increasing the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood. Factors such as inadequate maternal nutrition, environmental pollutants, mental health issues, and violence can also threaten early child development. Extreme poverty can also hinder families' ability to provide nurturing care (Capitani *et al.*, 2023).

Additional Learning Needs

According to Employee Wellness (no date), parents of children with Additional Learning Needs encounter many difficulties, such as understanding the disability, obtaining efficient treatments, managing emotional and physical demands, going to appointments, supporting school interventions and covering the cost of treatments that are not covered by health insurance or the educational system.









Challenges

What are the challenges in providing high quality care?

Funding

Maternity underfunding means care based on what trusts can afford, not on women's safety and needs (RCM, no date.) Maternity and healthcare professional underfunding based on trusts' financial constraints, increases pressure on midwives, affecting service quality. Longer work hours and staff absences lead to staff shortages and insufficient replacements, with lack of training and resources being put in place.
Early Years Alliance (n.d) reports significant funding cuts to Early Years settings, forcing closures and staff training delays, putting stress on parents, raising fees and denying support for children with additional learning needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Support

New strategy for maternity and early years services in Carmarthenshire County Council (2024), has introduced a new strategy for maternity and early years services, focusing on integrating services for all children. The approach, involving local governments, third sector partners, and medical experts, aims to detect early needs and integrate services, aiming to reduce barriers and challenges faced by families.

Further information

https://fis.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/

https://thousanddays.org/issues/







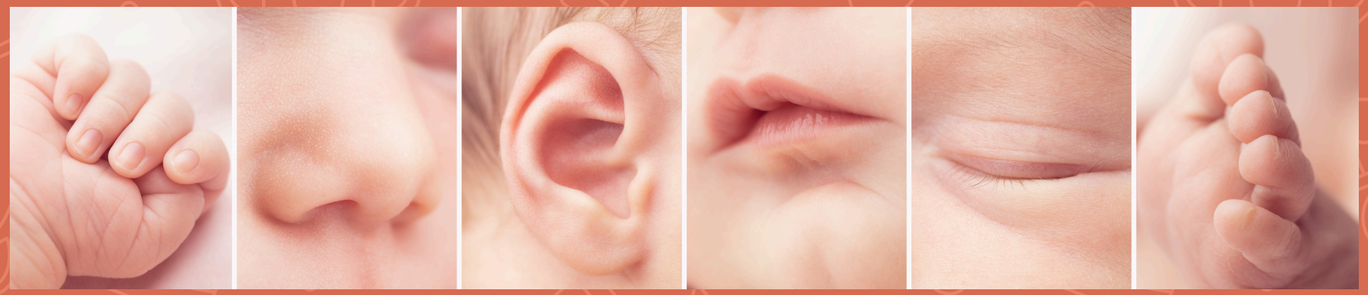
Environment-Early Years Setting

Stead (2024) suggests that childcare should be designed with child brain development in mind, incorporating sensory and language enriching environments. This fosters cognitive development, understanding of relationships, acceptance, and skills for later life success.

In addition, NHS (2023) states that babies feel safe, and secure gaining a sense of belonging while they can move freely and understand their body movement. Furthermore, Stead (2024a) claims the environment should have trained staff to be able to encourage and support brain development at the most crucial stage. Settings should be sensory and language-filled with daily routines to build bonding between child and caregiver, with language interaction. Play also plays a role in the development of the child where exploring and engagement brings connections and nurturing development.

The Early Years Alliance (2016) aims to create an inclusive, nurturing learning environment by organizing indoor and outdoor spaces, promoting diversity, creativity, and a sense of belonging. Activities include imagination, role play, problem-solving, and quiet reflection, while safe areas cater to basic needs like rest.

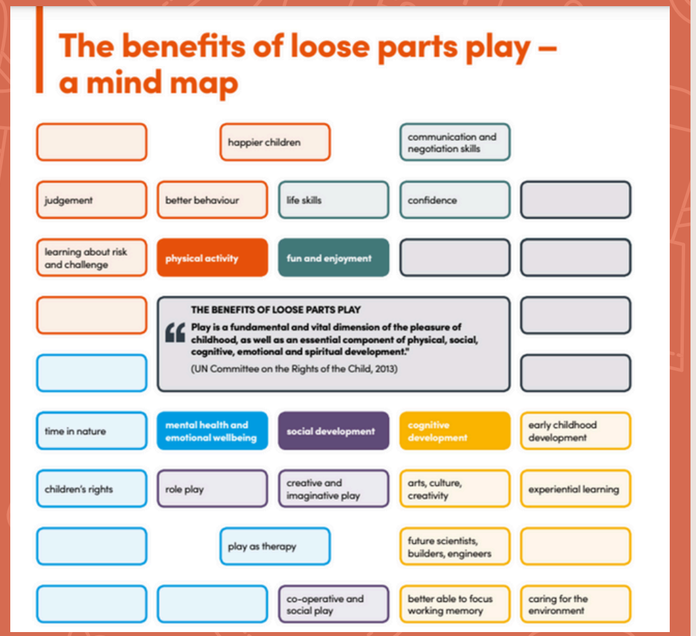
Whitters (2018) and Knowles (2017) maintains that for an environment to be inclusive the barriers need to be reduced for all children and families to have fair opportunities to fulfill outcomes and thrive in the future to reach their full potential. By creating the environment inclusive, it will create a healthier society. UNICEF (2022) states that in Article 28 all children have a right to a safe and secure environment regardless of gender, age, disability or culture.











Casey and Robertson (2019)

Activities

Loose parts

Daly & Beloglovsky (2015) suggest that loose parts play allows young children to explore and engage in free movement and play using natural, synthetic, upcycled, or bought materials. This approach, both indoors and outdoors, encourages fine and cross motor skills, problem-solving, cognitive ability, and meaningful learning by allowing children to put together, take apart, and build in endless ways while using meaningful learning.

Further information

https://www.playscotland.org/resources/print/Loose-Parts-Play-Tookit-Revised.pdf?plsctml_id=10924



(Easy Play Ideas for Kids, 2021)







Activities

Curiosity approach

(Learning Journals, 2021) maintains children's innate curiosity investigating their surroundings through the curiosity approach. The curiosity approach, rooted in child-led learning, fosters children's curiosity and problem-solving abilities through independent decision-making. Similar to Pikler, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia, this method encourages active learning and involvement with their environment. Research suggests that this approach creates a peaceful, natural environment, with professionals spending more time with children for child-led play and learning, fostering a mindful and respectful learning environment.

Church and Bateman (2022) imply the importance of talking to children while they are learning to develop their social, cognitive, language skills alongside eye-hand coordination and spatial awareness, the curiosity approach gives professionals the opportunity for this to happen while the learning and exploring is going ahead.



(22 Street Lane Nursery, 2022)

Activities

Messy /Sensory play

Hazie and Motherhood (2022) claims sensory/Messy play engages children's five senses: taste, smell, touch, hearing and sight. Children can experiment with a wide variety of materials, textures and items through messy play. Additionally, Gascoyne (2018) states, it will support cognitive and creative abilities, physical development such as fine and growth motor skills and it could give the opportunity to grasp, feel and shape materials and things. Their hand-eye coordination or fine motor abilities are improved as a result. It supports the growth of critical cognitive abilities, including how the child learns, thinks, investigates and resolves issues; being aware of their senses and taking control of their own learning. Children develop and learn while feeling they can explore in a playful, sensory, safe and secure environment this is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and other theorists.

Ideas











(Pinterest, 2023)

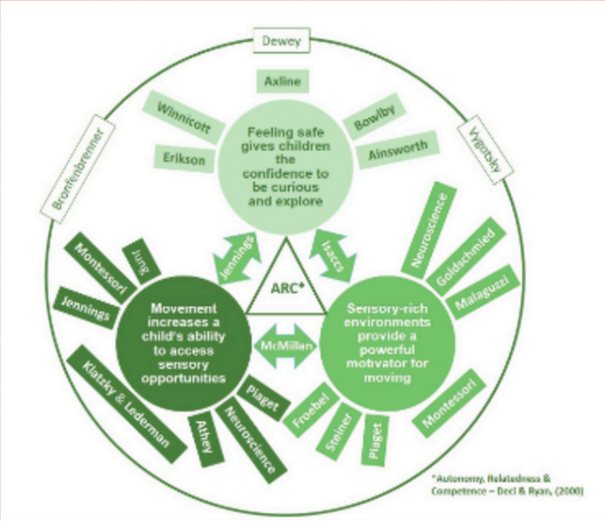


(Confidently Mom, 2020)



(Hazie and Motherhood, 2022)

Activities



(Deci & Ryan, 2022)

Theorists

Gascoyne (2018) states, other theorists such as Montassori emphasizes the importance of children's sensory and experimental opportunities, freedom to make decisions, Piaget's ideas of imagination and exploring skills, and Froebel's belief in unstructured and self-directed play.

Compare and contrast

According to the Welsh Government (2022) and the Ministry of Education (2017), both approaches are child-centered with the experiences and skills of the individual child being upmost importance. Physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development are all supported by both methods. Both approaches emphasize diversity and inclusivity however, in New Zealand the emphasis is on families, environment and the community. Te Whariki and Welsh Government curriculum methods both place a strong focus on working together with parents to support children's learning and growth. Unlike UK practice, which is more structured with learning goals and objectives, assessment and observation. Te Whariki approach is more flexible and adaptable, offering professionals flexibility with guidelines to tailor the curriculum to each child's needs by getting the family, the child and the wider community involved. Furthermore, Berg (2024) claims that Reggio Emilio's approach supports both curriculums by having the child in the center and having strong collaborative relationships and involvement with the wider community and parents. Also, it is mentioned that learning and the environment is guided by the children.

Extra activities

https://www.musicandmovement.org.uk/learning-resources/themed-activities/

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=9749&section=7

https://www.famly.co/blog/rhythm-and-music-games-toddlers-children

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=9749&section=7

Professional Partnerships

Community Change (2010) state that partnership working is having an open, trusting, honest and respectful relationship to communicate effectively for the best outcomes and goals. Likewise, The Open University (no date) suggests that effective partnership working involves a group of people connected for a purpose, leading to better outcomes, services, support, and decisions. It requires respectful communication, mutual support, and effort, resulting in quicker problem-solving, stronger relationships, and appreciation.

What is the role of an early years practitioner?

Public Health Wales (2023) state that Early Years practitioners can support caregivers and families in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.
Offering and providing valuable information and support to caregivers about the importance of the first few months and years of a child's life and how best to support the child and guide them in the right direction to further services if needed.

Early Childhood Management Services (2016) emphasizes the role of early years professionals in promoting healthy nutrition, advising family diets, and supporting parents' engagement by building strong relationships, while also creating a safe and meaningful environment for children's development and effectively responding to their needs.



(Early Childhood Management Services, 2016)

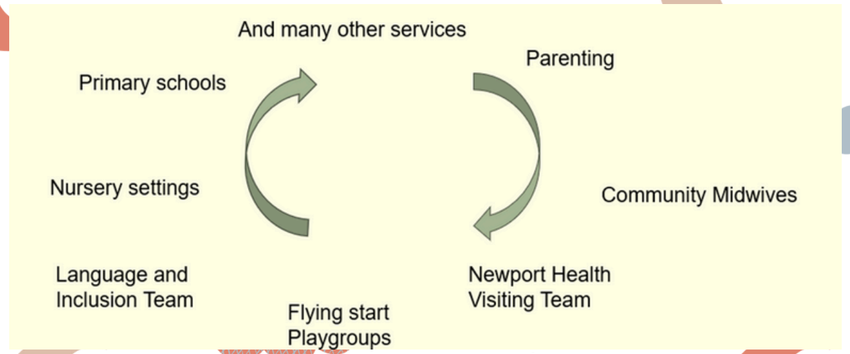
Early Years setting

According to the Department for Education (2024), if an effective partnership is created around a child the child has a greater opportunity to succeed regardless of background. There should be opportunities such as visiting the setting and getting to know values, culture and what is expected of the setting. This will allow communication and sharing knowledge and interests of the child. Building effective communication can decrease any barriers such as language, different values, disability or any concerns. The parents could also get involved by volunteering, attending workshops or regular updates while sharing information in many ways.





Support for parents



(Limegreentangerine, no date)



(Carmarthen County Council, 2024)

Further information

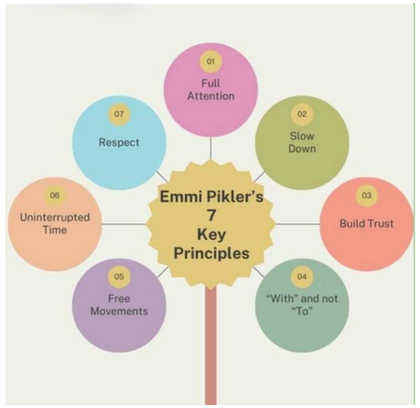
https://www.caerphillyearlyyears.co.uk/flying-start/

https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/professionals/our-work/family-support-and-parenting/parents-connect-wales/parents-connect-wales-hub/parenting-support-and-services-wales/newport/

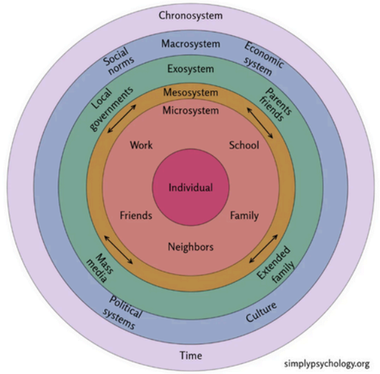
https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/services/newport-family-support-team-fst

Theorists

Marlen (2024) maintains that Emmi Pickler's theory influenced the importance of relationships between infants and caregiver to build healthy attachments to develop physical and emotional development. The importance of talking, soothing and reassuring the child while doing daily tasks such as nappy changing or bathing and giving the child free movement and choice. This makes the child feel secure and valued to understand strong relationships.



(Little Bright Explorers, no date)



(Simplypsychology, 2024, cited in Guy-Evans, 2024)

Similarly, Paquette and Ryan (no date) claims Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasize the impact of relationships and environment on a child's development. It highlights bi-directional influences and the influence of behaviors and beliefs. Brodie (2024) mentions Bronfenbrenner's work has significantly influenced early years settings, fostering stronger partnerships between families, agencies and educators to promote child learning and development.







