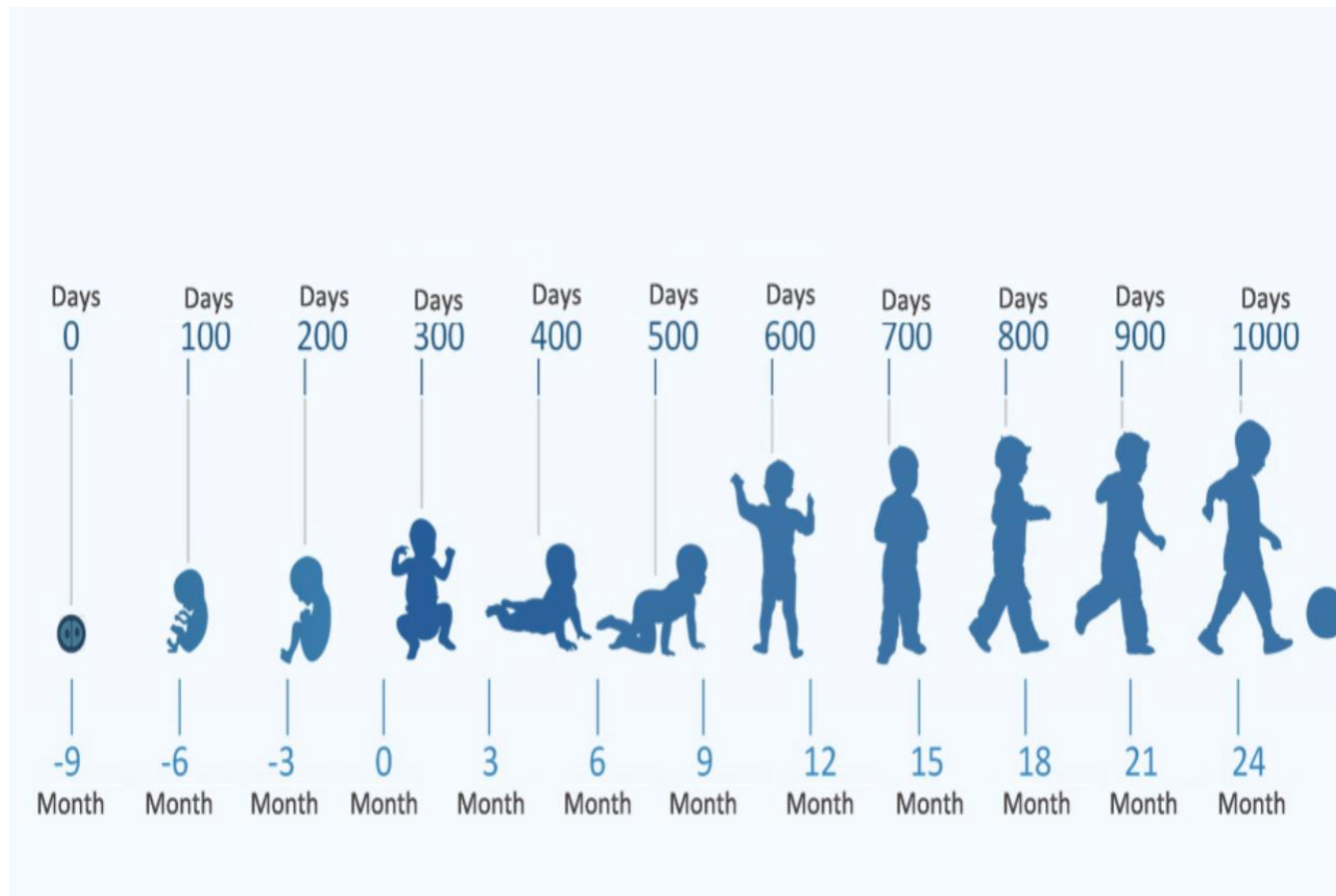


The First 1000 Days- A Digital Scrapbook



(IDSMED, 2019)

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Introduction

What is the first 1000 days?

The first 1000 days of a child's life refers to the period from conception to around 2 years of age. This is a key stage which will lay out the foundation of a child's development. If a child experiences stresses or adversities during this time it can result in their development falling behind, this can separate the child from their peers as stated by House of Commons (2019). This significant period in a human's life has a substantial short- and long-term impact to the child's health and wellbeing during each of the 5 stages.

The stages are:

- pre-conception
- conception,
- 9 months pregnancy,
- 1st birthday
- 2nd birthday (EFCNI, 2018).

(These stages can also be seen in the image above).



Why are the first 1000 days important?

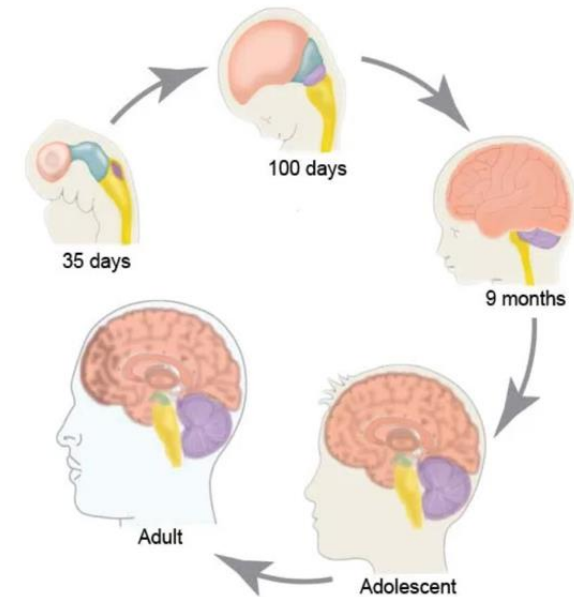
During the first 1000 days of life, the child's health and wellbeing can suffer due to different factors. If the mother's diet and health are poor, then this will negatively influence the child's development as well as leaving long term effects on their health and well-being according to Cureus (2022). This time period is key for developing human capital and for building height. As well as this, the time before a child's second birthday the brain develops more rapidly than at any other time in a person's life (Cohorts, no date). This is discussed in more detail on the next page.

Brain development during the first 100 days

During the first 1000 days of a child's life, there is rapid brain growth and development. By the time the child turns two they will have a massive 80% of adult brain weight. To ensure the maximum benefits for the child it is key to ensure they have good nurturing as stated by Kumar (2016) This is substantially down to the mother's role.

What is the mother's role in helping brain development?

The mother's role starts from the first day their baby is conceived. As stated previously they will need to take care of their own nutrition in order to ensure the baby is healthy. If the mother is stressed or anxious during her pregnancy it can be sensed by the baby. This can result in their child struggling with many social and emotional problems which can ultimately shape a baby's brain development causing them to have a life long impact on their emotional health (NCPCC, 2024).



(The University of Queensland, no date)



1,000 days, 2023

The importance of Nutrition

During a person's life, the brain will never grow as quickly as it does during the first 1000 days. This demonstrates that it is key to ensure the child gets all the right nutrition's to support the rapid brain development. The effects of poor nutrition can be significant and long lasting which is why it is necessary to understand how you can give the child the proper nutrition they need for their first 1000 days (1,000 days, 2023). During pregnancy there are increased nutritional demands, these are important to meet as the nutrition being satisfied is key for maturing and adapting cells throughout the fetus as stated by National Library of Medicine (2019).

Caregiving



(Daisy Chain, 2023)

The Role of Adults

Working with children during their first 1000 days requires a variety of different skills, one example would be: being there for all the child's needs. This involves talking to them, reading to them, eye contact and giving the child cuddles. Practitioners working with this age group should be kind, enthusiastic, flexible, attentive and responsive with the children in their care (Kathy, 2018). All Children need a safe environment to explore and learn so they can acquire all the skills needed in their life. The children in settings should be safe from hurting themselves on dangerous objects or slippery floors etc and should also be protected from violence or anger which is aimed at them. Adults and practitioners have a significant roll to protect children from harm or severe criticism as stated by UNICEF (2024).

Inclusive Practise

What is inclusive practise defined as? Inclusive practise refers to creating a safe and positive setting where every child's differences are valued and embraced. One of the characteristics of an inclusive settings involves, all students being valued as equals and implementing strategies to increase the participation in the education curriculum for all the children. Educating the students together in an inclusive school environment provides many benefits for children with disabilities and without.

Some of the benefits for the children are (Pennsylvania – department of education, no date):

- Developing an understanding of everyone's different abilities and characteristics.
- Increasing development for sensitivity and support towards all classmates and each other's differences.
- Giving the child opportunities to experience diversity.
- Promotes opportunities to be educated with same-age peers and develop communication skills.



(Think Inclusive, 2017)

(The Pikler
Collection, 2012)



Emmi Pikler

Respect and trust are key factors of Emmi Pikler's approach. This can be demonstrated by allowing the children to problem solve independently on certain activities and by encouraging children's involvement in care tasks. The tasks include the necessary and frequent role of feeding, nappy-changing and dressing. These roles can be an opportunity for children to learn through the 1 to 1 activities as they are thought to be key moments which will contribute towards cooperation and intimacy. These are also times for the practitioner to bond with the child on a different level and create safe and happy relationships as supported by the education hub (2019).

Stimulating Environments

Environments for children during the first 1000 days should be filled with lots of safe objects for children to explore and play with however they choose. The caregiver is the most important person when putting together a stimulating environment as they can create an inviting, challenging and safe area to play and experiment as suggested by Bright Futures (no date). So, what can you put in your setting to create a stimulating environment?

Here are some ideas:

- Plan activities which the children can go back to over time.
- Provide objects the children can play with and explore in their own way.
- Consider the resources that can be put out.
- Are there enough resources for all the children so no one is left out?
- Create different activities around the room so the children can experiment.



(Community Playthings, 2011)

Professional Partnerships



(University of
Bolton, 2024)

The role of the practitioner.

The role a practitioner has in a child's life will shape the children's development. It is key that Educators engage in a teaching and caring practice as well as creating positive relationships with each individual child by responding to all their different needs (Majory et al., 2017). The role of the practitioner has developed significantly over the last 30 years as there are a lot more responsibilities to consider now. Some of these are further engagement with the children, more involvement with the parents and a duty to keep in contact with multi agencies in a range of different contexts. The workforce has been transformed through new opportunities and professional learning into a visible workforce (Sagepub, 2012).

Importance of effective partnership working

Practitioners have a responsibility to make a difference to a child's outcomes. It is important to make each family member of the child feel comfortable opening up about any issues or concerns they may have, as well as making them feel welcomed and listened to. The parents are experts in their child and have a substantial knowledge on the child's abilities and preferences. Involving the parents in a child's nursery experience is one of the most effective factors in enabling the children to do well in their learning and can also provide a chance for the parents to deepen their knowledge and understanding for how the child learns (Birth to 5, 2024).



(Fatherly, 2022)

Importance of effective communication

When speaking to parents and relaying information there are many forms of effective communication. Some important skills to keep in mind are listening skills, facial expressions, body language and gestures. During an exchange of information, it is key that both parties in the conversation clarify what they are saying to avoid any misunderstanding. Make sure the information received is 100% correct before ending the conversation as stated by FW Solutions (no date). When parents and children first enter a setting, it is key to make them both feel confident about the environment and the practitioners. Effective communication is the easiest way to create a positive atmosphere surrounding them. Practitioners should be friendly, welcoming and happy to answer any questions or concerns that the family may have before they are ready to leave their child at the setting (Cooper, 2010).

(Penn LPS,
2024)



Inclusive environments and learning

To create an inclusive setting, it is important to include the social and emotion side as well as changing the physical space and materials for the children. Practitioners should aim to make meaningful relationships with all the children and fully include toddlers and infants with disabilities as much as anyone else. Some of the ways to adapt materials and meet the needs of all the children in the settings is by choosing the toys carefully. For example, including sensory materials which encourage children to use their sense of smell, sounds, and sights will enhance their development (Inclusive Environments, 2021).

Challenges

Challenges with providing high quality care.

One of the biggest problems with childcare is that it is especially expensive in the UK. This means that many families cannot afford to put their children into day-care. There is currently no free care for under 3 years of age, so a significant number of parents chose to stay at home with their child instead of putting them into nursery or childcare during the day as stated by Women's Budget Group (2023). This will mean the child struggles more when they join nursery or school later as they will not be socialised with other peers.



(Children Now, 2019)

Challenges infant face within the setting.



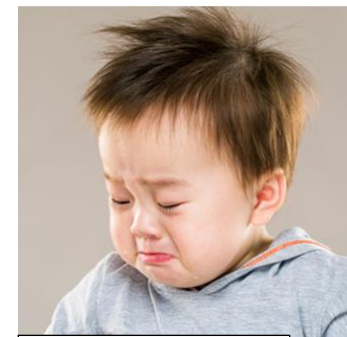
Baby Info,
2020)

Aggression

Aggressive behaviour in children happens because of high emotions such as anger, fear or frustration. Children show aggression verbally or physically as they do not know how to express what they are feeling yet. This can include screaming, crying, pinching, hitting, biting or pushing other children. It is likely that children will show aggression at times as this is a normal part of child development (Anna Freud, 2023).

Bereavement

When the child is under the age of two, they will not have any understanding of death however, the child will notice if their caregiver is absent. Once the child is age two, they will start to notice other absent people as well, such as grandparents. Some common reactions for children dealing with bereavement are loud crying which cannot be comforted, upset about changes in routine, trouble sleeping and tummy pain, trying to find the person and asking where they are/ where they have gone (Marie Curie, 2022).



(Golisano Children's
Hospital, 2024)



Crying

During the first 1000 days children cry as a form of communication about their needs and the way they are feeling. A baby's cry can be a sign for multiple different things. Some examples are being hungry, tired, in pain, sad, uncomfortable, unwell or they want to be picked up or cuddled. Toddlers cry for many of the same reasons that they cried when they were a baby. Sometimes toddlers may be crying about new emotions like embarrassment or frustration. Crying is a normal response from babies, and it will decrease over time (Anna Freud, 2023).

Separation anxiety

Separation anxiety from 6 months to 2 years is very common. They will become clingy to their parent and start crying when separated from them. They can also feel separation anxiety with the practitioners if they get put down or leave a room. This part of children's development is normal and should stop happening at around age 2-3 (NHS, 2023).



(Adoption Choices, 2020)

Sharing

Sharing is an important skill for children to learn as it will help them make friends and form good relationships. Toddlers can often really struggle with sharing toys and end up having a tantrum if told to give it back to the child. Sharing is a complicated idea to understand at such a young age so it is important not to expect too much from the child as they are still learning about the world and do not have the psychological skills to understand the reason why people would share yet (Anna Freud, 2023).



(Zeavin and Silverbush, 2023)

Sleep

Toddlers need around 11-14 hours of sleep in every 24-hour period. This will often consist of 10-12 hours sleep at night and then 1-2 hours napping during the day. As toddlers are developing fast their sleep habits will change often. You may be able to spot certain behaviours such as grumpiness which will indicate they want to go to sleep soon. Once the child is asleep, they should not be sleeping for longer than 2 hours in the day as they will have difficulty sleeping at night if they do nap for any longer (Raising children, 2023).

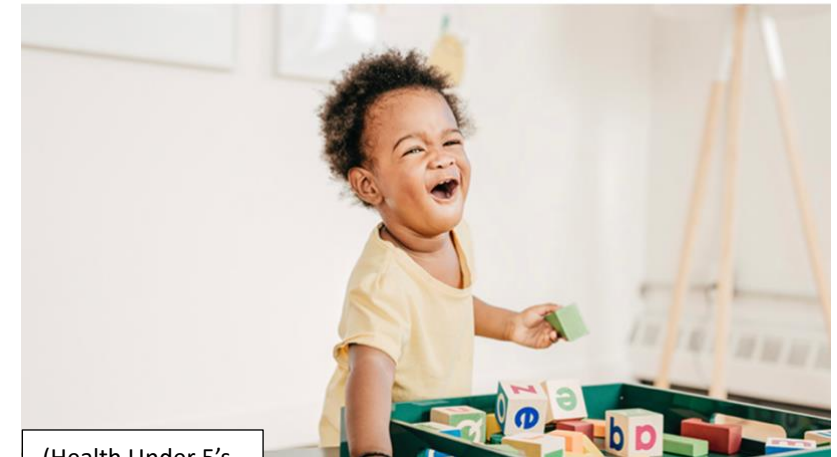


(Children's Health, 2023)

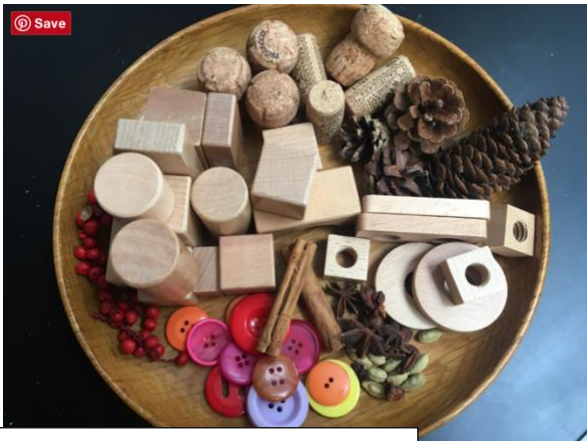
Activities

The benefits of play

The activities that children experience early on shape how their brain develops. This means that the earlier that children start learning from their play the more likely they are to succeed in school. While children are playing with other children or having books read to them, their brains work harder which will ultimately contribute to a child's brain developing well. Play comes naturally to children as it is part of their daily routine. While they play, they will use all their senses (tasting, hearing, seeing, smelling touching and moving) to collect information about different aspects of their life and organize it into the picture of themselves and the world around them (UNICEF, 2024).



(Health Under 5's, 2020)



(Little Hand's Learning, no date)

Loose Parts

Some examples of loose parts include pinecones, postcards, rocks, hair rollers and bracelets. A child will be able to use any of these objects to play, learn and invent their own games. Including loose parts in practice will allow the children to use their imagination more while developing. For example, they can use a stick and pretend it is a wand or use a pinecone and pretend it is an apple. While Infants and toddlers continue to play and explore with loose parts, they develop their understanding which will support good development. Encouraging investigating and experimenting with the items in their play will benefit the children significantly (Daly and Beloglovsky, 2017). The Impact of embedding loose parts into play during the first 1000 days is, it will improve the child's health and wellbeing.

Here are 6 things which are supported by loose parts play (Casey and Robertson, 2019):

- **Safety-** Allows the children to gain awareness and understanding for safety skills.
- **Staying healthy-** the children are outside playing with an access to nature which will support their overall wellbeing.
- **Achieving and Succeeding-** opportunities for problem-solving, communication, imagination and creativity.
- **Active-** during play with loose parts the children will be using their muscles and strength.
- **Respected-** children get the opportunity to be involved in evaluating and developing their loose parts play.
- **Responsible-** Children have the chance to play with others and take responsibility for resources they are using.

Sand Play

The way children first learn about the world is through senses. Because of this a child's first reaction to sand is to touch, pat, smell and taste it until they have finished experiencing pleasure from the play. This will often result in them moving onto another activity. To enhance the experience that children will have while playing with the sand, practitioners can add tools and materials such as a spade, bucket spoon or plastic. Making one half of the sandpit wet and one side dry will encourage the children to use more of their sense to understand the different sands they are playing with as supported by Glow Scotland (no date).



Creating effective environments

When creating an effective setting for children under 2, the keys things to keep in mind are (Hodgman, 2015):

- Good amount of space
- Resources of good quality
- Eye catching displays
- Easy accessibility
- Stability

If all these factors are a part of the environment it will promote good physical and emotional wellbeing for the children. The best setting for children will encourage their learning and ensure that every child's development is being supported across all the different areas of learning. The environment plays a significant role in a child's development. An effective setting will provide chances for stimulation and challenges, including each child's interests. A stimulating setting will add aspects to the play area, have a space for quiet time and reading and finally an effective environment should provide safety for all the children (Hodgman, 2015).

Benefits of music and storytelling

Singing songs and telling stories to infants and toddlers help with language development and enhances their memory skills. While signing nursery rhymes, they can pick up on different melodies and words which increases the speed that language develops (Kinderland, no date). Reading to children under 2 helps them to recognize certain sounds, words and language. It will also Spark the children's imagination and curiosity as well as promoting healthy brain development (Raising Children, 2024).



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