



THE FIRST 1000 DAYS

The Importance of the first 1000 days



What happens in the early years, starting in the womb has lifelong effects.” (Sir Michael Marmot 2010).

The first day of pregnancy until the second birthday of a baby is counted as the first 1000 days (about 2 and a half years). Therefore, the first 1000 days of life are especially important for the life of a child. According to Mc Mullen (2009), what you do, eat or experience during the first 1000 days has lifelong consequences for your health. The First years of life are a critical opportunity for building healthy, resilient, and academically competent children, young people, and adults (Burton2015). Thus, the overall development of the foundation of the brain, body and immune system takes place during this stage. Moreover, there are three crucial stages in the first 1000 days: pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood. According to the development of health and social care, it is important to give every child the best start in life, Intervention must begin before conception and continue throughout childhood. Moreover, the foundation of a child's health and development (Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional and behavioral development) are laid, and a trajectory is established. Piaget identified four stages of cognitive development. They are all important in the exceptional care of children, but our focus will be on Sensory Motor development. During this development children develop their early ideas including mental imagery and thinking skills also their language develops. In the First 1000 days babies need Healthy food, caring relationships, a health and safe environment and a time to play. Research shows that babies' brains develop faster than any other time of life. Thus, the right diet during pregnancy is particularly important as it helps with the baby's learning, physical skills, and emotions to develop properly. In addition, the senses play a part in developing skills in movement. Let us look at each skill at different ages of a child:



1 - At 5 months, the baby should have doubled his or her birthweight and can roll over from back-to-back.



2 - At 12 months, the child can walk, turn the pages of a book and drink from a cup. The child can pick up and hold toys.



3 - At 20 months (about 1 and a half years), The child can kick a ball forward, and pick it up to throw it overhand to a parent. The child should also be able to thread large beans on a piece of string.

what exceptional care could look like?



What exceptional Care could look like

Affection and attachment are vital for children's well-being. However, it is safe to say that even noticeably young babies will not confuse their carers with their parents, and they are more likely to suffer from the lack of a close personal relationship at nursery. (Gillespie Edwards, 2002). Hence the reason exceptional care of a baby during their 1000 days is essential. Parents and practitioners should both play a role in the care of incredibly young children. Research has shown that the early nurturing of incredibly young children and the importance of attachment between the caregiver and the child are considered as vital components in optimal brain development. (Gammage, 2006). In addition, the attachment theory states clearly the need for young children to be in the care of warm responsiveness practitioners. According to Bowlby (1953), "childcare and the growth of Love, that an infant forms a relationship with its mother which is special and different from the relationships he or she forms with other adults". He further stated that the first six months of a baby's lives bonding with their mother is important if broken would cause irreparable damage to the baby. Furthermore, according to Bowlby attachment theory babies can have long lasting damaging effects if the mother leaves the child. Nevertheless, caring for children in the first 1000 days is a big responsibility. In the first 1000 days to ensure the best care for your baby:



4 - A healthy environment- Including in the womb



5 - Time to play



6 - Safety and security



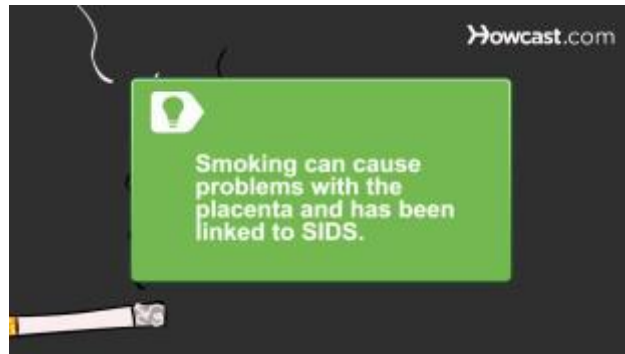
7 - Loving relationships



8 - Healthy food



9 - Breast feed for at least 6 months



10 - Avoid smoking, alcohol or drugs



11 - Eat a healthy diet when you're pregnant. The right diet during pregnancy and in early childhood will help a baby's learning, Physical skills and emotions to develop properly.



12 - Give your baby lots of love and attention so they feel secure.

Nutrition in the first 1000 days



Nutrition in the first 1000 days

Beginning Nutrition education in the first 1000 days is an important part of helping to ensure that children will achieve healthy lifestyles. Children need good nutrition and nurturing care in the first 1000 days. Therefore, Healthy eating is vital for all round development and physical growth. Thus, it is seen that according to the age, gender, and differing needs of a child, they may have different nutritional requirements. According to the Caroline Walker Trust dedicated to the improvement of public health through healthy food in 1998, stated that one expert group is necessary to research nutritional guidelines for practitioners in early years settings working with children under the age of 3. Research has shown that mothers need to ensure that they receive good nutrition in the womb and

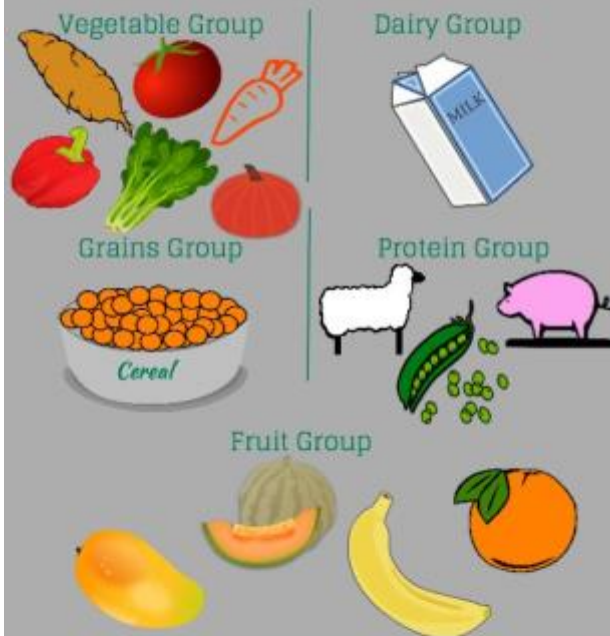
through early life. This is essential for a child's future health. In addition, the development of a baby's metabolism, immune system and organs can be Influenced by the eating, weight, and lifestyle habits of the mother. However, During the first 1000 days health problems such as obesity, heart diseases and stroke can arise when eating poorly during pregnancy. Moreover, good nutrients during pregnancy and the first years of a child's life will provide the essential building blocks for brain development, healthy growth, and a strong immune system. Hence one can use the Piaget theory as a guide in nutrition education because it helps with the developmental stages of childhood.

First 1,000 Days

The first 1,000 days is the period of time during pregnancy up until the child's 2nd birthday

This period of time is critical for a child to gain the proper nutrition

What foods are high in vitamins and minerals?



Maintaining proper nutrition during pregnancy ensures a child's healthy development for the future.



<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/pregnancy-breastfeeding/making-healthy-food-choices.html>



Ways to provide nutrition in the first 1000 days

During pregnancy, all prenatal vitamins, and a nutritious diet should be taken by a mother.

After birth, for a minimum of 6 months, a child should be breast fed as complete food.

Breast feeding mothers should focus on a healthy diet so that all nutrients pass onto the baby in a natural way.

If a mother is unable to breastfeed, formula milk should be given that contains omega fatty acids like DTLA.

Sugar and salt before one year of age may impact a child's immunity and digestion system.

Introduce new foods one at a time.

Give a variety of foods in the form of soups as early as possible after 6 months of age.

Furthermore, all nutrients are essential for overall development but protein omega fatty acids, iron, Vitamin b6 and folate are essential for the Childs brain development. As a result, if proper nutrition is

not fueled to the brain and the uterus and in the initial years of life it may affect immunity and brain functions of the child. Additionally, a baby requires these nutrients for optimal brain growth: Calories, Choline, iron, iodine, vitamin A, B 12, zinc, protein, Vitamin k .



13 - prenatal vitamins



14 - Breastfeed baby up to 6 months



Rabbit Food Pyramid



There are significant problems, for both mother and child, associated with over/under-weight mothers and infants who are small/large size at birth



What to avoid in the first 1000 days



Processed foods

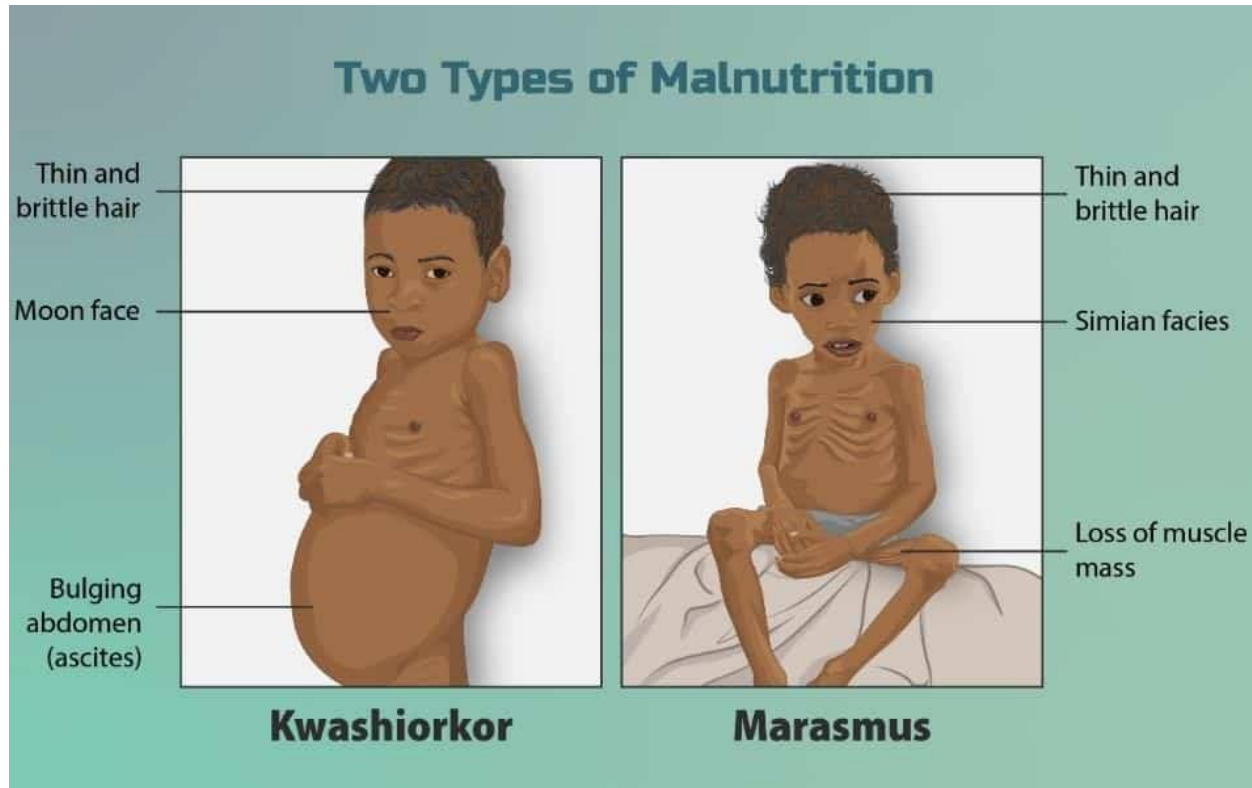
Junk food

High sugar foods



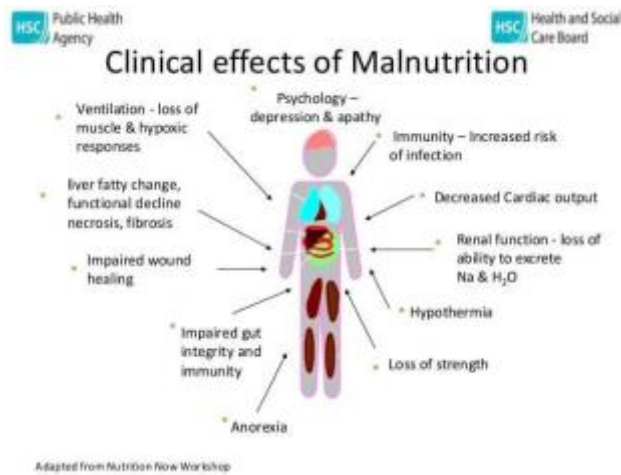
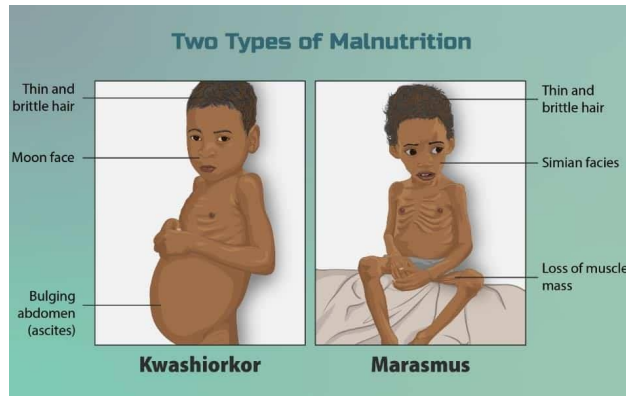
15 - high sugar foods

Malnutrition and Obesity in the first 1000 days



Malnutrition can impact the overall development of the baby and over nutrition can cause obesity in childhood and diabetes, heart, and other dangerous diseases in later years of life. According to Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) evidenced the impact of malnutrition on brain development, showing deficits in intelligence and attention capacity. However. In the prenatal period, the brain grows rapidly, and a balanced diet is needed to supply correct nutrients. In addition to this, babies of malnourished mothers have more chance of developing heart diseases later in life (Forsn et al., 1997).

On the other hand, Research has shown that obesity is believed to begin in the womb (Yu et al., 2006). Therefore, if the mother was obese in pregnancy children are more likely to be obese as well because poor nutrition in the womb may remodel the brain circuitry to dispose children to become obese in later life (Lamerz et al., 2005). At the same time this could suggest that expecting mothers need to be educated and be more serious about what they eat in pregnancy. For example, folate (folic acid a water-soluble form of vitamin B9) is important in preconception and in the first 3 months of pregnancy for reducing the risk of damage to the neural tube and spinal cord (Balluz et al., 2006). Additionally, Iron intake should be 50 % in pregnancy as this is essential for red blood cells and the production of tissues (Leary et al., 2005; Judge, 1997).



16 - obesity

Care and Education. Is there a difference?



Separating education and care is unrealistic and unreasonable. According to the Cambridge dictionary, Care is the process of protecting someone or something and providing what that person or thing's needs. For example: Nurseries are responsible for the children in their care. While education is the process of teaching or learning. I do not think there is a difference, Caring and early education cannot be separated as caring is educational and education is caring. Therefore, both are effective when responsive to the child. It has been argued by Hayes, 2003b that reconceptualizing care as nature would strengthen the attention to the educative value of care and allow for more appropriate nurturing pedagogy to emerge in early education learning environment. However, pedagogy is a word that covers the various aspects of teaching to support children's development holistically. Petrie (2004) makes the case for using this term to reflect the complex roles of those working directly with children and she argues that the term creates the image of a professional space where care and education meet, integrate and become one. It cannot be denied that. However, "high quality early education and childcare delivered with love and care can have a powerful impact on young children" (DfE, 2013:13) The evidence is clear that a good start in early years caring, and education can have a positive effect on children's development, preparing them for school and later life. Therefore, according to the National Minimum Standard (NMS) for regulated children care standards 7.11 stated when providing for children under 2 years of age:

Children interact with consistent adults at frequent intervals throughout the day.

There is clear planning of babies' activities.

Children under 2 should be fed and changed by their key worker.

Standard 12.9 pointed out if care is provided for babies and children under the age of 2: feeding and nappy changing takes place in accordance with the child's individual needs.



The Current challenges of caring for an infant during Covid 19 pandemic



Subsequently, the covid 19 pandemic has brought with it challenges for Early childcare Centre's. To adapt to these challenges the government has put in place certain strategies to help parents as well as ensuring children continue to receive a quality education. Additionally, in early childhood education this international health crisis has impact and cause dramatic changes in the lives of children and their families, practitioners, and keyworkers. Worldwide, covid 19 has pushed the early childhood education system to the verge of collapse and mobilized leading early childhood organizations to advocate for covid 19 financial packages to protect early education programs (NAYEYC 2020).

Enabling Adults



Caring adults count more than resources and equipment (Birth to three matters framework principle)

Affection and attachment are vital for young Children's wellbeing. It is safe to say that even incredibly young babies will not confuse their carer with their parents, and they are more likely to suffer from the lack of a close relationship at nursery. (Gillespie Edwards, 2002: 22) However, fundamental to young children's healthy development and crucial to the development of their thinking are the parts adults play in their children's lives and in their all-round growth and development. Research has shown that there are 3 key principles to respectful care. These include primary caregiving, freedom of movement and respect for infants' confidence and competence. Primary caregiving is based on the relationship between a small group of children and caregivers. It is also called the key person approach. On the other hand, freedom of movement is essential for your children to develop their minds and emotions and their bodies. For instance, babies can build their tummy muscles by placing toys out of reach and they can stretch to grab items. This can also count as physical development. This approach helps babies to learn how to look up, left and right to see people and objects. Thus, moving their head around helps the development of their skull as well as strengthening their neck and shoulders. While the other aspect of having respect for confidence and competence is where nursery practitioners involve children in a process of activities such as changing a nappy, washing hands, changing clothes, or taking part in activities. In addition to this the Maslow hierarchy of needs focuses on what children need from adults. Physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem needs and self-actualization. Thus, adults need to attend to the basic needs of a child before you can expect them to reach their full potential .

The importance of professional relationships

Recently it has been argued that relationships with people who care for and about children are essential in children's development and lives. According to Te Whariki Ministry of Education (1996), Relationships are one of four key principles in the early childhood curriculum. The curriculum highlights that a child learns through relationships and interactions. For practitioners, their roles involve not only supporting the relationship that children are developing but also the professional and personal relationships they are having with colleagues, families and children that are central to their daily work. In addition, Te Whariki emphasizes the role of responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things in children's learning.

However, when parents talk and play with their young baby as part of early interaction, they are giving the baby important lessons of communication. This includes recognizing essential information from adults, nonverbal signals and linking facial expression with tone of voice. In addition, babies can also learn to take turns in play by typically making vocal sounds and parent responding. Hence this helps babies to learn to share attention and feel that communication is fun and emotionally rewarding. Therefore, parents are advised to continue interactions as children move through babbling stage and later become conversation when they develop their first words. However, before this happens children need to partake in lots of interactions. According to Bowlby (1969) In order for healthy (mental) growth the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate relationship with his or her mother in which they find satisfaction and enjoyment. Bowlby specified four phases during which the development of children takes place with their carers:

Birth to 3 months. He believed that during the first two to three months of life infants respond to people, but they do not distinguish between them.

Phase 2: From 3 months to 6 months- Bowlby believes that when infants are about 3 months they start to differentiate between people, and they begin to reserve their attachment behaviors for people they prefer.

From 6 months to 3 years- Bowlby stated that at 6 months babies' preference for a specific individual becomes more intense and when those individual leaves the room the infants will have separation anxiety. By the time babies are a year old they have developed a working model of their favored individual.

Effective partnership



Early childhood teachers need to understand the influence of sociocultural contexts and family circumstances on learning, recognizing children's competencies and be familiar with the variety of ways that children may demonstrate their developmental achievements (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009)



The role of the Key person



The Key person role includes emotional support, keeping the child in mind, observing and acting where necessary, any changes in mood, health, or behavior and liaising with parents and being a special person for their children.



Enabling environment

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs (Early Education, 2012:)

An enabling environment is a rich and varied space where risks are minimized and professionally managed and children protected from harm and abuse. One of the key principles of the Early years 'foundation stage is that of 'enabling environments. This is instrumental in supporting and extending children's development and learning (DCSF,2008; statutory Framework, P. 10). Research has shown that there are significant differences between an appropriate physical environment for a baby and a suitable environment for three years old. Therefore, it is vital that the physical environment can be adapted confidently to the baby's needs. Thus, the quality of the environment available to a baby or a child is vitally important in its learning, development, and well-being (Clare,2012:1). In addition, the physical environment is essential across the birth to three age groups to ensure that it is safe, suitable, and engaging. Moreover, furniture and equipment must be age appropriate (Callanan et al., 2012:39). On the other hand, the learning environment is a rich and varied environment that supports children learning and development which gives children confidence to explore and learn in a secure and safe yet challenging indoor and outdoor environment (National Strategies, 2008b:32).

According to Clare (2012:60) environments for the under threes are challenging to organize due to the number of contradictory requirements. She stated that rooms must have:

Quiet reflective spaces to avoid over stimulation

Flexibility for children themselves to change them during play

Meeting developmental needs

Consider language development including listening spaces to encourage children to talk.

Nappy change areas need to be well organized with all the consumables such as nappies, wipes, and creams within easy reach.

Apart from that you could also include pictures of stimulating environments both in and out the support of infants' holistic development. According to post and Hohmann, 2000:14) providing an active learning environment for infants and toddlers encourage their need to look, listen, wiggle, roll, crawl, climb, rock, bounce, rest, eat, make noise, grasp, or drop things and be messy from time to time.





Enabling experiences

Bruner views symbolic representation as crucial for cognitive development and since language is our primary means of symbolizing the world, he attaches immense importance to language in determining cognitive development. Bruner further stated that what determines the level of intellectual development is the extent to which the child has been given appropriate instruction together with practice or experience. In addition, Piaget, Bruner, and Vygotsky all emphasized cognitive development as being intricately linked to the brain's construction and knowledge within a social context. Piaget considered the most critical factor in a child's cognitive development to be interaction with peers. On the other hand, Vygotsky believed that the most fruitful experience in a child's education is his or her collaboration with more skilled partners. He further stated that the more experienced partner provides help in the way of an intellectual scaffold, which allows the less experienced learner to accomplish more complex tasks than may be possible alone.



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