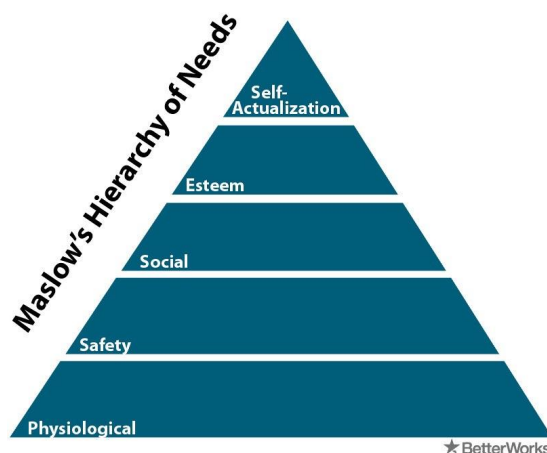


The first 1000 days

Why are the first 1000 days important?.

When a child is brought into the world at birth there are many factors that contribute towards their first 1000 days within their childhood. Pregnancy is a particularly important period when the physical and mental wellbeing of the mother can have lifelong impacts on the child. For example, during pregnancy, such factors as maternal stress, diet and alcohol or drug misuse can place a child's development at risk. (1,000 Days, 2018)

A child will notice the closeness of voices between the people around them as soon as they start to grow inside of the womb. (Timmons, 2015). Within the first 1000 days a baby will be in need of several basic needs. As of Maslow's theory, Maslow applied that children will need the basic needs before anything else (McLeod, 2007). He showed that physiologically the child will need, warmth, love, food, water and rest to be able to achieve the other things in life. Without the physiological needs, moving up the diagram would be harder for a child to achieve. (McLeod, 2007). Loving and secure relationships are important for a child's development. It's through their relationships that they learn to think, understand, communicate, show emotions and behave. Relationships affect how they see the world and help them understand how they fit into society. (Australia, 2021) . Within the first 1000 days children will also learn how to crawl, talk, walk and to create sounds, this is down to opportunities by caregivers and settings. Some parents will return to work after certain a certain amount of time off. The setting will care for the children and should provide for the children as a comfort of the caregivers not being able to be there. Children should be nurtured within the first 1000 days as they are bound to be new to the world around us and should feel safe and secured . (McLeod, 2007) The first 1000 days will also be recognised as the most important as we look closely to how they grow as individuals rather than how children should be cared for as a whole in the first 1000 days. Some families will experience hard and challenging outcomes within the first 1000 days. Support is vital within these cases and the first 1000 days, such as situations where the child will be born with a disability. (Timmons, 2015) This will be monitored during pregnancy but for some the disability won't be recognised until further into the first 1000 days of childhood and therefore making the most of the first 1000 days for a child is mostly important for a child to progress in understanding the world around them.





Brain Development

Here is a short video of how a child's brain develops within their early years and the first 1000 days.

<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/>

As a child's brain develops they take in all the things around them within the world, including the people and partnerships they have surrounding them. *"From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life". (First Things First, 2018)* Although the brain continues to develop and changes into adulthood, the first few years can build a foundation for future learning. (Bushell, 2020)

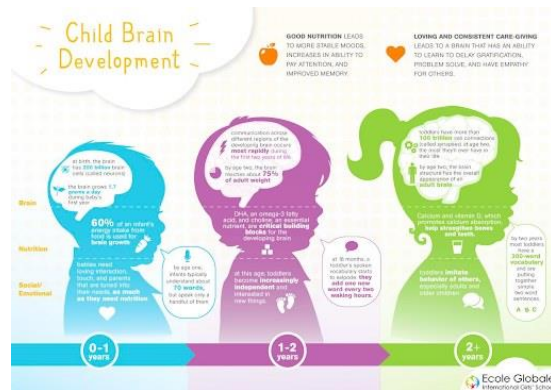
Research has shown that 80% of a child's development within the brain occurs in the first 1000 days of their life. This is a critical time for any child's brain development. (midb.umn.edu, n.d.)

A child's brain development relies on positive relationships and experiences to form and to build a healthy brain for a young child. (NSPCC, 2021)

As Unicef stated, *"The first 1,000 days of life - the time spanning roughly between conception and one's second birthday - is a unique period of opportunity when the foundations of optimum health, growth, and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established". (Office, 2013).*

Jean Piaget applied that children's intelligence undergoes changes as they grow. Piaget's theory of cognitive development also acknowledges that children need to build or develop a mental model of the surrounding world. (Main, 2022)

Although looking at brain development does set a milestone for every child and targeting where and what is expected of the child within the first 1000 days, not every child will reach these milestones. Every child is different and is capable of their own individual achievements. (FutureLearn, n.d.) Every child within those 1000 days will develop from birth until childhood, but will develop in different ways at different times and in different stages. And this should be recognised as the norm. Children will grasp at different opportunities and will learn in many other ways to others. Some children will learn faster than others and we need to accept that this is fine. Some will learn by exploring the outside and inside environment, whilst others might learn through reading books and listening to nursery rhymes. (FutureLearn, n.d.)



1 - (Ecole Globale, 2020)

The Environment within the first 1000 days.

Enabling an effective and safe environment for a child is critical, especially within the first 1000 days. Creating an experienced environment full of activities and effective resources, enables a child to develop their understanding of the world by learning off the objects they have surrounding them. (Duncan and Lockwood, 2008, pp.134–135)

Within the environment, this will also mean the people around them. Whether this is at home or within a setting. A child's basic needs requires love and looking after every little second of the day. (McLeod, 2007)

It is significant that a child has a close relationships with the parents or guardians, including the people they have around them daily. Given the option to explore, communicate, and to share emotions is also a key factor through a successful development within the first 1000 days. (Early Years Matters, 2022)

"Stress, trauma, poverty and violence experienced during the first 1000 days can have long term adverse health effects on a baby". (Australia, 2021)

Every child has the right to feel safe and to explore the environment without being harmed. In 2016 an annual report by Save The Children was published. Their priority is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children. Save The Children's aim is to make sure that every child receives a safe and sustainable environment without harm or neglect. (FOR CHILDREN RESULTS 2016 ANNUAL REVIEW, n.d.)

Becoming aware of different environments is beneficial for children within their development and growth. Children will become attached to parents during their first 1000 days as they are only becoming aware of other people and their role over the child in life. (Duncan and Lockwood, 2008, pp.134–135) Children will engage with others and will become aware of trust in specific people that they are exposed to daily. Settings such as childminders and nurseries will give children the opportunity to achieve a censored and positive environment. As of this, not every child will have the opportunity in life and especially within the first 1000 days to explore the environment, down to the background and upbringing of their caregivers. Not every responsible caregiver can offer their children the best qualities in life and therefore it is our responsibility to ensure that within the first 1000 days of life, children get to grasp these opportunities elsewhere. (Australia, 2021). It is also vital that children have the opportunity to learn through their choice of language and to feel comfortable within an environment that appreciates their choice of language, whether this is a

personal choice or a caregivers choice. Children have the right to chose a language they feel most comfortable in. (Office, 2013)



2 - (FOR CHILDREN RESULTS 2016 ANNUAL REVIEW, n.d.)



3 - (Edinburgh Innovations, n.d.)

Encouraging natural and sensory play within the first 1000 days.

As stated by (www.froebel.org.uk, n.d.) children within the first 1000 days will become aware of the senses around them. This can be, the sounds, smells, what they can see, taste or feel.

"The experiences we have as young children shape the rest of our lives. We believe in the importance of play, learning through nature, practical hands-on learning and nurturing a child's connection to their community" (www.froebel.org.uk, n.d.)

Froebel's Trust looks at the way we give children the opportunity to learn through play, not only using toys and drawing on paper but also giving children the option to explore on the outside within the environment. (www.froebel.org.uk, n.d.). Some nurseries will offer a summer school within the setting, this can be a forest school which enables children to learn within the outside environment, creating natural pieces of work by using the natural things they have around them within a woodland environment. Also this will recognise the holistic growth over the long term woodland learning by trained practitioners. It is of the child's benefit if the children within a setting is exposed to a woodland learning setting within the first 1000 days, for them to become aware of the natural learning around them. Unfortunately not every setting offers the woodland learning. (Forest Schools Education, 2019).

Below we will see a video Clip of some children enjoying the outside learning within a woodland approach.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9ADLZv7jms>

Other natural resources for children within the first 1000 days also include sensory baskets.(Froebel Trust, n.d.) Sensory baskets are baskets that might include, natural instruments such as a simple empty bottle filled with rice for a baby to shake. Other baskets might include empty cartons that are filled with lavender for a child to smell. Others may include a feeling sensory such as a soft baby brush for them to play with. Children will learn from the simplest things within the first 1000 days.

One person that showed great passion in creating and exploring the treasure baskets was Elinor Goldschmied. The Treasure Basket is a collection of around 80 natural, and recycled objects placed in a basket for a child to explore with. She considered that her most important contribution to our understanding of the first 1000 days of development was her concept and belief of the Treasure Basket. (Froebel Trust, n.d.)



4 - (www.froebel.org.uk, n.d.)

The importance of language and communication.

"The most intensive period of speech and language development for humans is during the first three years of life, a period when the brain is developing and maturing rapidly" (Nubabi, 2016)

A child's language and communication will develop by encouragement and communication by the people around them. Within the first 1000 days a child will be exposed to numerous people that communicate with them. Without communication and exposure to correct language this will impact on the child later in life and children will face life long challenges and inequalities . (Talk with me Speech, Language and Communication (SLC): Delivery Plan Community version, n.d.).

As professor Phillip Zimbardo of Stanford University told the British psychological society, *"we are entering. new ice age of non- communication"*. (Dowling, 2007, p.21)

Children within the first 1000 days are developing rapidly and therefore we need to ensure they're healthy and that they're developing towards their period within the early years and the near future of adulthood. Children will need to feel securely attached and become socially competent. (Dowling, 2007, pp.21–22)

As we look closer to the subject, within the early years and the first 1000 days, there is one factor that has had a major impact on children's language and communication, the impact of COVID-19. The drastic impact has seen children lose confidence, lose knowledge and the development has been struck back to where children should be.(NSPCC, 2022) Within the first 1000 days children should be starting to acknowledge the world around them which enables the brain to develop. Other factors also contribute, such as mother and baby classes, meeting with other parents and sharing experiences, swimming classes and much more valuable activities. (The Children's Society, 2021)

Children have been set back from doing different activities that guide them through language and communication. Within the first 1000 days it is vital for children to have these experiences to progress and to gain understanding of the world. (The Children's Society, 2021). Within settings we see the impact that COVID-19 has had on children through language and communication and notice more on the specific subject of language and communication.



Role of the Adult.

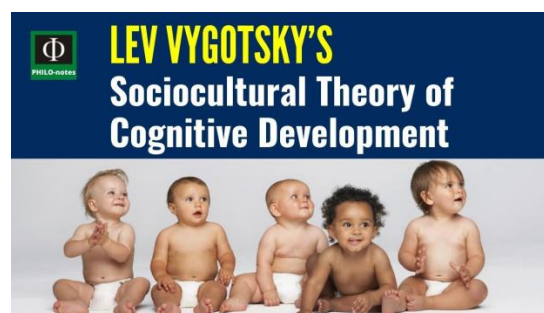
The role of the adult can benefit so much towards the first 1000 days for children. (1,000 Days, 2018). A new born baby will benefit so much from her/his mother within the very first few minutes after being born. An adult will comfort, communicate and love the baby in a way that the baby starts to learn and develop as quickly as being born. The first 1000 days will be the beginning of a child's lifelong benefits and development. Adults role within the care they give and experiences they share will impact on developing and giving them the best start in life. Children should be kept safe by adult's within their role and to monitor their development by encouragement and approaching their knowledge to develop further within the early years, and the first 1000 days. (1,000 Days, 2018). The way an adult treats a child is very important, caring for them and giving them their basic needs. (FutureLearn, n.d.) Nutrition within the first 1000 days is one of the most important basic needs a child will receive. (SR Nutrition, 2020) Nutrition is an important aspect of keeping a child healthy. A child will need a variety of nutrients within the first 1000 days. Iron plays an important part within a child diet for a healthy brain development. Iron deficiency can affect a child by playing a role in their learning as well as their social and emotional development. (SR Nutrition, 2020). Other nutrients such as, protein, zinc, iodine and folate also benefit children's development. Although a child should be exposed to these nutrients, it is also vital that the mother takes care of herself throughout her pregnancies. Folic acid will help the child to grow and to prevent the child from needs such as Spina bifida and the growth. (NHS, 2022). The role of an adult will always be applicable within the child's life but extremely vital and important within the first 1000 days. (SR Nutrition, 2020)

Inclusion

All children should be included within every experience and have the right to be equally treated and to develop. (UNICEF, 2017). All young children need to be nurtured, and need to be treated with respect and love. Inclusion is vital and important to a child's healthy development. (Nutbrown and Clough, 2011, pp.71–73) All children have the right to be included in activities and to education. All children also have the right to be included in experiences within settings and out of settings including children who may have disabilities. (UNICEF, 2017b). Inclusion within the first 1000 days will give children the opportunity to explore create and to understand the world around them. All children should also be included within play and social interaction in developing cognition. (UNESCO, 2009) A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a "zone of proximal development". (UNESCO, 2009) Children should be included in every aspect of cognitive development, whether the child has a disability or not. (Nutbrown and Clough, 2011, pp.71–73)



<https://youtu.be/8l2hrSRbmHE>



<https://youtu.be/lHf4UjCfDaE>

International Approaches

Reggio Emilia approach

International approaches are a wide range of theory's and people that impact on a Child's life worldwide. One person that contributed towards a child's development and learning was Loris Malaguzzi. Malaguzzi came up with a collaborative way of learning guiding the Reggio Emilia approach, named after a small town in Italy. (Berg, 2020). Within the Reggio Emilia approach came 5 fundamental principles, one of them being that children have many languages. (bartramacademy.com, 2017) Malaguzzi took the opportunity to look at the 100 languages and the 100 things that children have in the early years of life. Bruner also looked into aspects of learning which complied with Loris Malaguzzi's approach. Jerome Bruner's Theory of Development is based on the assumption *"that we learn best when we go from concrete to abstract"*

in a three-step process: First comes hands-on "Action", then learning with "Images" and finally students transform what they've learned into "Language". (Koblin, 2021). Both looked at the approach within giving children a process of learning within their best ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbm2b1IM-kA>

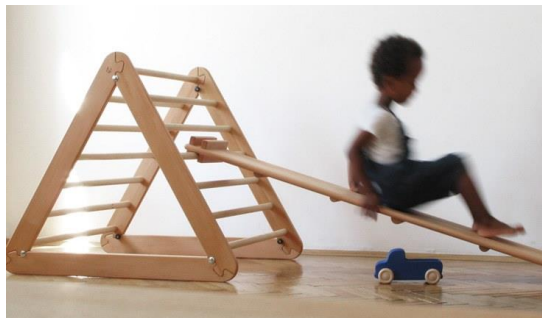
Pikler

Pikler set an example that the world would need to consider, especially within the early years. She knew that in order for babies to develop perfectly in the way that nature had intended, certain things must be changed and recognised. (www.aspiringbeginnings.co.nz, n.d.)

These included, The long term impact of free movement on a baby's spirit, intelligence and physical being. Respect being shown to babies at all times and clarifying what that entailed. The importance of a way a baby is touched and supported in the important birth to two years period. That no babies needs 'help' to reach their milestones in life. We can however support them with patience. (www.aspiringbeginnings.co.nz, n.d.)

Creating enough space for children to explore and to move around is vital when a baby is crawling and exploring it's surroundings. Within a few nurseries Pikler suggested that the children lead the way and not the adults. By doing this children will learn to observe and carry out thoughts and problems on their own.

Pikler also believed that giving children the time in the day and focusing on the important values and care would benefit the child. (The Learning Space, 2015) Pikler suggested making nappy changing a fun and pleasant time for children and to be unhurried throughout a child's experience. Talking to children throughout it's time of eating and feeding is a critical way of giving the child a soothing and loving experience. (The Learning Space, 2015). Some children may become fretful and caregivers may become stressed. It is beneficial for other caregivers to create a calm and welcoming setting that is beneficial for their peaceful experience. (The Learning Space, 2015)



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¹<https://www.froebel.org.uk/>