

Module code and Name

ECEY4005:The First 1000 Days

Digital scrap book

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introduction

During the first 1,000 days of life, neuroplasticity and growth rates are at their highest. while nutritional shortages can have their most severe effects. In particular when combined with psychosocial stimulation, ensuring that women's, infants', and young children's nutritional needs are met during this period can help prevent child mortality and the burden of lifelong disease ,maximise growth, and allow children to reach their cognitive and developmental potential. Even though these effects provide a compelling epidemiological case for targeting interventions during this window, it's crucial to keep in mind that healthy nutrition throughout life is likely to have the largest absolute benefit in terms of health and other outcomes because neither growth nor brain development cease at 1,000 days.(Crystal D Karakochuk , 2018).

The first 1,000 days of life, or about the period between conception and the second birthday, are a special time when the building blocks for lifetime neurodevelopment, growth, and optimal health are laid. *The brain keeps developing and changing throughout life, but the fastest growth and most adaptable phase happens during the last 3 months of pregnancy and the first two years of life. It's a period of high plasticity of life. The first thousand days of a child's life are crucial for their development. During this time, their brain is rapidly forming and laying the foundation for their overall health, including neurological and cognitive development. it's an incredibly important period of their life*(Sarah Cusick, 2013).

The first thousand days of a child's life are incredibly significant. It's a time of great potential. How well or poorly mothers and children are nourished and cared for during this period can have a profound impact on a child's growth, learning, and overall well-being. This is because the first 1000 days are when a child's brain begins to develop and when the foundations for their lifelong health are established, its truly a crucial time for a child. adequate nutrition plays a fundamental role in a child's development and has significant implications for a nation's prosperity. insufficient nutrition during the first 1000 days can have irreversible consequences and impact their academic performance and future earning potential, while also perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Furthermore, it can serve as a precursor to later health complications such as obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases, leading to long-term health challenges. therefore, prioritizing optimal nutrition during this critical period is essential for ensuring a healthy and prosperous future (Anon., n.d.)

Caregiving

Each child should have access to a top-notch education that meets their needs, helps them excel, and unlocks their full potential. They must have the chance to thrive and achieve great things. Education truly shapes their future.

Each child learns at their own pace, and it's completely normal for some to face challenges that others have already mastered. It's important to recognize that these differences are a part of childhood development. By making small adjustments in teaching methods or providing a little extra support, we can help them overcome these hurdles. It's crucial to address any delays or difficulties early on and provide the right kind of assistance, without assuming it indicates a long-term special educational need or disability. Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive! Not all needs will be long-term, but it's crucial to plan activities and curriculum in a way that supports children who may have some concerns. For example, if a child hasn't had much exposure to conversations at home, they may struggle with turn-taking and vocabulary. This doesn't necessarily mean they have special educational needs, but they will benefit from help, support, and encouragement to develop their language skills. You can assist them by modeling turn-taking in conversations with others and reading to them regularly to introduce new words. It's all about nurturing their communication and language abilities.

Dr. Emmi Pikler, a Hungarian theorist, made a lasting impact on early childhood care in various countries across Europe and beyond. Her approach to child development has been influential and has shaped the way we understand and support young children's growth. It is fascinating to see how her ideas have spread and influenced early childhood care practices globally. Dr. Pikler, back in the 1930s recognized the importance of creating secure attachments for children's development. She understood that providing respectful care, especially during times of bodily care, played a significant role in fostering self-initiated activity and influencing various aspects of a child's self-image and self-control. Dr. Pikler's insights were initially developed during her work as a family pediatrician in Budapest and further expanded upon in the orphanage that she ran for over 65 years. Her dedication to understanding and supporting children's growth is truly remarkable. Here are her principles.

- Respectful care
- Calm gentle with no distraction
- World peace starts at the changing table
- The child's interest
- With the child, not to the child
- Learning language
- Adopting the child's movements

According to (David and Apell 2014) At the Pickler Nursery School in Budapest, dressing is super important because the kids spend a lot of time outside. Pikler had a special way of letting kids do things on their own and making sure they were all taken care of. It is awesome how different approaches can make a big difference in how kids grow and learn (Belasko, 2023).



<https://youtu.be/a2wJqDw9B68>

Professional practice



Professional partnerships

One of the roles practitioners have is to help children who are learning English as an extra language. To do this well, practitioners need to think about their teaching and learn about the best ways to help these children. By doing this practitioners show good support to the children. In Britain, there have been two studies that looked at the important role of professional practitioners in supporting children and their families. These studies highlighted how practitioners play a crucial role in providing support and guidance to both children and their families. In one of the studies conducted in Britain, they looked at a head teacher who worked in a school with children from different cultures and special educational needs. The study found that the head teacher had some really helpful advice and reflection to share. The second study was focused on a class teacher from another school who had mostly white British children. Two different scenarios showed the role of practitioners changed according to their setting because the 2nd school had to reflect harder than the first one as the first one had the majority of the children who were non-speaking English. The first study which was conducted with a head teacher who was dealing with different cultures had experiences as it wasn't a new thing and children were supported according to their inclusive practice whereas, in the second study, the reception teacher had a specific focus on helping five non-English speaking children feel comfortable and settle into the class environment which they were able to achieve that in five months with the good supporting practitioner (Nóirín Hayes, 2017).

Effective partnership plays a massive role in a child's life to develop and grow Bronfenbrenner's model says that children are at the center of all these influences, and it has had a big impact on early childhood education. It's all about understanding and supporting children within their unique surroundings. In early childhood education, adults play a special role. They balance being involved but not intervening too much. This means they actively support and teach children while also giving them space to explore on their own. A nurturing pedagogy is a different way of teaching compared to what many of us experienced in our education. It means that adults have to let go of our traditional way of teaching which is the sole source of knowledge, and children are just passive recipients. Instead, it's about creating a more interactive and engaging educational relationship where both the practitioner and the children actively participate in the learning process. High-quality early years practice focuses less on a curriculum driven by specific content and direct instruction, and more on a framework of values and principles. It respects the process of an inquiry-based curriculum. This particular curriculum develops from the collective experiences of everyone in the learning environment. It is influenced by the setup and routines of the setting, the available activities and materials, and the intentions of the adults involved. It's all about creating a dynamic and responsive learning environment for children. A crucial aspect of effective practice is to actively involve and respect children while integrating learning opportunities across different dimensions of time and space. It's all about creating a comprehensive learning experience that considers all aspects of a child's development and provides meaningful and interconnected learning opportunities. This approach helps practitioners support children in their overall growth and development.

- The early months of pregnancy are an incredible period where a new life begins to emerge within the conceptus, and the mother undergoes remarkable physiological and psychological adaptations. The communication between the mother and fetus plays a vital role in long-term health outcomes. This communication is primarily influenced by the maternal environment, which includes genetic factors, physiological changes, nutrition, inflammation or infection, and psychological aspects (Louis J. Muglia, 2022).

Challenges

Local councils have specific obligations when it comes to early childhood services. They need to make sure that there are enough high-quality options available for children, including wraparound childcare. It can be quite a challenge for local authorities to fulfill their obligations when it comes to early childhood services. They have to navigate the requirements for funded places, which include ensuring quality, while also making sure that there are enough places available for children. It's all about finding the right balance between providing high-quality care and meeting the demand for early childhood services. It's a tricky task, but an important one to ensure that children have access to both quality and sufficient care. Some local authorities are expressing significant worries about the future of early years settings in their area. However, (national data, 2022) suggests that there has been a small decline in the number of settings doesn't always mean a major decrease in available places. The availability of places can vary depending on the specific area (Anon., 2022).

Children who have a top-notch preschool education end up healthier, more successful, and better ready and confident for school compared to those who don't have the same chance. But sadly, not all children have access to high-quality preschools or care. Mostly it happens because teachers are paid less or less training for the practitioners is in place. There 3 big challenges seen in the UK overall in the early years which are as follows;

- Scarcity of resources
- Lack of training
- Low parental engagement

Scarcity resources

The lack of resources in the early childhood education system poses a significant challenge. It has a big impact on the quality of education and the ability to create safe and healthy environments for them to learn better. Teachers often face the challenge of being underpaid and overworked, especially when they don't have extra staff to assist them with behavior issues or management techniques. These kinds of issues can make it harder for the practitioners to fully concentrate on teaching their students, which can lead to bring test scores.

Lack of training

Early years teachers mostly don't receive specific training on understanding the unique needs of young children. This can include skills like reading nonverbal cues and knowing how to respond appropriately when a child is upset. Teachers need to be prioritized for training so they can support to effectively address the emotional and developmental needs of young children.

Low parental engagement

Parents play a crucial role as their child's first educators. They lay the foundation for their child's learning and development right from the start. By providing a nurturing and stimulating environment, a parent can foster their child's curiosity, language skills, and social-emotional growth. But unfortunately, this is one of the challenges we face in the UK. Many parents want to take part in their children's education, but they often face difficulties from the workplace like not getting enough time away from work, lack of transportation, and not having good literacy skills as some have difficulties such as English not being first language, and not having the right guidance on how to help their young children. Communities and schools need to understand and acknowledge this challenge and provide support and resources to help parents overcome it. This can only happen when the funding issues get solved which is another challenge overall that stops all these challenges along with many other challenges from being solved (vairinder, 2023).



Enabling environments

- An enabling environment is specially designed to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of young children. It provides them with the right balance of stimulation and challenges to promote their growth and development. By recognizing a child's interests, the environment allows them to freely explore and experiment. The environment needs to be adaptable, allowing for moments of quiet reflection and focused learning. This way children can engage in deep learning experiences that cater to their individual needs and preferences. It's about creating a nurturing environment that fosters their overall development (Hodgman, 2011).



(source: Anon., 2020)

Activities

Phonetic object box

According to Montessori science activities for students have a strong focus on the human eye's external structures and functions. They use hands-on object box activities to provide a concrete learning experience. By encouraging students to manipulate objects and engage with their sense of touch, these activities help them better understand and pay attention to what they are learning. Montessori education incorporates these interactive and tactical approaches to make science come alive for students. These activities in Montessori education use analogies to help learners make connections between what they already know and new concepts. Students can better understand new concepts and develop their vocabulary, which is important for critical thinking and effective communication. These activities promote deeper learning and enhance students' ability to think and express themselves (Rule & Welch, 2008).



(source: Montessori, 2022)

Hopscotch

- Hopscotch is a fun outdoor game that is quite educational and it plays a major role in cognitive development. The main rule of this game is that you have to avoid stepping on the lines stay inside of the box and move from box to box avoiding the lines. It's a great way for children to develop their concentration skills as they focus on each step and try to maintain their balance (Anon., 2024).
- According to Montessori education, children learn through the movement of their hands, which she believed was connected to the development of their intelligence. She emphasized the importance of providing an environment that is prepared to meet the unique learning needs of children. Montessori recognized that children have sensitive periods, or specific windows of time when their senses are particularly receptive to learning new ideas (Pound, 2006).



(source: Anon., 2024)



(source: Rodgers, 2020)

- Loose-part play is all about having a bunch of different materials that can be moved around and played with in lots of different ways. It's all about using your imagination and getting creative while you play. By having a variety of loose parts, it gives the child endless opportunities to come up with new and exciting ways to play. This game supports the early years development standards (EYDS) in so many ways. It helps children with their personal, social, and emotional development by encouraging interaction, cooperation, and building relationships with others. It also promotes communication skills as children engage in conversations and express their thoughts and ideas. On top of that, the game supports physical development as children move, manipulate, and explore loose parts. It even enhances literacy and mathematical skills as children engage in imaginative play and problem-solving (Rodgers, 2020).
- According to Froebel, play is the main way children grow and develop. It lets them be at their best and helps them learn in a really fun and hands-on way. He explains creativity as the core of being human and plays a vital role in learning. It allows children to connect their inner world of thoughts and emotions with the outside world of objects and experiences. Through play, imagination, and symbolic representation., children can express their creativity and explore new ideas. Spending time outdoors directly experiencing the natural world is super important. It helps them appreciate how amazing nature is and understand how everything is connected. By seeing and interacting with plants, animals, and the environment, children can develop a sense of wonder and learn about the interrelationship between all living things. (Tovey, 2012).

Loose parts play

International approach to forest school

UK

Before the urbanization of the 19th century, there wasn't a need to formally link education with the outdoor environment. People naturally spent more time in nature, and learning happened more organically and intuitively. Things changed over time and the UK started to recognize the importance of intentionally incorporating the outdoors into education (Knight., 2013).

Denmark

The concept of working with children outdoors was indeed developed in Denmark in the 1950s. Although it's not specifically referred to as "forest school" the idea of incorporating nature and outdoor experiences into early childhood education has been embraced and practiced in various ways around the world. Norwegian's ways of educating the children through the outdoor world were very similar to Denmark's (Knight., 2013)



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