



The First 1000 Days!

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'Ahakoa he iti he pounamu ~ Although it is small it is a treasure'. (Maori proverb)

What's the aim of this document?

The aim of this document is to highlight the importance of the first 1000 days but to also educate anyone who is unfamiliar about this crucial time. There will be information on any relevant agencies and how they may help. Phone numbers for extra help, support or guidance.

Introduction



What is the first 1000 days?

The first 1000 days encompasses the moment of conception to a child's second birthday. In the first 1000 days, the neurological development of a child's brain is vastly rapid with changes materializing from conception.

The first and foremost moment we possess to establish solid foundations for optimal development is during the first 1000 days. (Moore, et al, 2017). [CCCH-The-First-Thousand-Days-An-Evidence-Paper-September-2017.pdf \(rch.org.au\)](#)



1 - [Conception to birth -- visualized](#) / [Alexander Tsiaras](#) (2010)

This video on Tedtalks hosted by Alexander Tsiaras shows the visual development of the foetus from conception to birth.

Babies Brain Development



Prenatal Brain Development

- Brain begins as a fluid-filled neural tube about three weeks after conception
- The neural tube is lined with stem cells
- Neural stem cells divide and multiply, producing neurons and glial cells
- Top of tube thickens into three bulges that form the hindbrain, midbrain, and forebrain
 - Hindbrain structures are first to develop
 - Followed by midbrain structures
 - Forebrain structures develop last, eventually surrounding and enveloping the hindbrain and midbrain structures

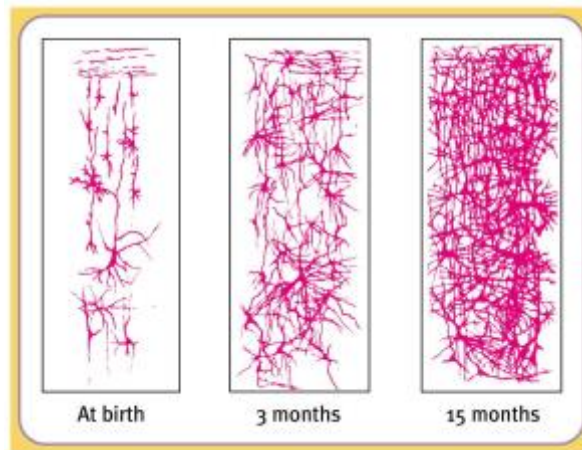
During peak periods of brain development, new neurons are being generated at the rate of 250,000 per minute.



2 - Image 1

[chapter09-9-638.jpg \(638x479\) \(slidesharecdn.com\)](#)

The development of a babies brain from conception.



3 - Image 2

Neural networks developing from birth to 15 months.

Pregnancy birth and baby (2019) has stated that the human brain has 3 main parts, these are:

- Brain stem and cerebellum - connects the brain to the spinal cord and controls not only the body's breathing but also balance, reflexes, heart rate and blood pressure.
- Limbic system - this sits on top of the brain stem, it also oversees an array of functions. Some of these include emotion, hunger, thirst, memory and learning.
- Cerebral cortex - sits on top of the limbic system and has a right and left hemisphere. It is also divided into 4 areas.
 1. Frontal lobe - known also as the 'control panel', it controls memory, problem solving, judgment among other things.
 2. Temporal lobe - hearing, language and social interaction.
 3. Occipital lobe - vision.
 4. Parietal lobe - controls pain, pressure and hot and cold.



4 - [How your baby's brain develops | Pregnancy Birth and Baby \(pregnancybirthandbaby.org.au\)](http://pregnancybirthandbaby.org.au)

At birth a baby has approximately 100 billion neurons as well as some synapses. As the neurons form the increase of synapses occur. These synapses that are infrequently used are eliminated by the brain, this is part of the brain developing. (The University of Maine, 2011).

There are many ways of supporting the development of these connections, these could be in the form of:

- Treasure boxes - a box made up of everyday items like, a toothbrush, rubber gloves, hair brush.
- Singing
- Talking
- Messy play - painting, outdoor activities.
- Going down to the child's level to talk.
- Responding to the child's cries and babbles.
- Eye contact.
- Nutrition.
- Professional love.

It is recognised that experiences a child goes through aid the brain to develop and mature, and the neurological connections made aid with rationally dealing with issues as they face them. (Gaskill and Perry, 2012).

[UNICEF - FIRST 1000 DAYS](#) (2017)

This video by UNICEF gives some detail about the first 1000 days in a babies life.

How to encourage a child's brain development.

Bandura (1977) social learning theory believes that children learn through the environment by observing and modelling the behaviours observed.

Bandura (1961) did an experiment in which children watched a woman physically and verbally abuse a doll, later the children mimicked the behaviour of the adult and the children attacked the doll in the same way.

[Bandura social experiment. Bobo doll](#)

Piaget (1950) on the other hand, believed that there were 4 stages to cognitive development, these being sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational.

The sensorimotor stage is defined as the first stage, it begins at birth to 2 years of age. They experience and gain knowledge through their sensory and motor abilities. They are born with certain abilities such as, sucking, grasping, crawling, pulling and listening.

Piaget believed that a child wants to actively seek knowledge and is involved in the development of their own thinking. He saw experience and social interactions as second to what he called 'schemas'.

Schemas are like building blocks. They are patterns of repeated behaviour, such as a toddler emptying the contents of toy box over the floor. (Pacey, 2022).

Throughout this time of enhanced susceptibility, the underpinning of a child's health and development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural development) are set and a path is established. (Parliament, 2019)

Nutrition

[World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#)

New data from the inter-agency team, the estimates of child malnutrition. World Health Organisation (

It is agreed that pregnant women should eat a well balanced and healthy diet during pregnancy, it not only supports the mother's health but also the health and development of the foetus. However there can be much confusion about what someone can and can't eat.

Tommy's (2021) have given a comprehensive list of the foods that women should or should not be eating, they also say that the saying 'eating for two' is a myth and that managing portions you eat is key part of eating a balanced diet.

The National Health Service (NHS) (2020) likewise agree that a healthy and balanced diet is important during pregnancy, what's more state that although a mother will get most of their vitamins and minerals through a healthy and varied diet, folic acid supplement should be taken along with vitamin D.

Folic acid ~ Can prevent birth defects known as 'neural tube defects, such as spina bifida. 400 micrograms is recommended in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Vitamin D ~ Helps absorb the correct amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, for healthy bones and muscles. 10 micrograms is recommended in pregnancy and breastfeeding.



5 - Image 3

[Eatwell guide 2016 FINAL MAR-161-1024x724.jpg \(1024x724\) \(nhsforthvalley.com\)](#)

The first 1000 days is a period of rapid growth for the foetus and nutrition is important for both mother and baby. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2013), build on this by adding the foundations of optimal health, growth and neurodevelopment are established in them first 1000 days and that all nutrients are paramount for brain development and function.

[The first 1,000 days of life: The brain's window of opportunity \(unicef-irc.org\)](#)

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) was asked by The Department of Health (DH) in 2008 to publish a guidance document to improve the nutrition of pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children in low-income households for the public. [Maternal and child nutrition](#).

Public Health Wales (2022) launched a website called Every Child Wales. The website contains information for parents and professionals alike. There is information from before a baby is born through to as a child grows. They talk about outdoor play, a child's sleep, there is also family food recipes.

[Every Child Wales](#)

The National Health Service (NHS) (2021) have stated that the Government recommends all children aged between 6 months and 5 years are given vitamin supplements containing vitamins A, C and D.

Vitamin A are needed for a healthy immune system, aid their vision in dim light but also keeps skin healthy.

Vitamin C is important for a child's general health and immune system but can also help their body absorb Iron.

Vitamin D is only found in a few foods such as eggs and oily fish, so it is difficult to get enough of this vitamin through food alone. The other source is the sun, however a child's exposure to the sun should be minimal and they should be covered.

Sources of vitamin A:

- **Dairy products**
- **Fortified fat spreads**
- **Carrots, swede, sweet potatoes and mangos**
- **Dark green vegetables such as, spinach, cabbage and broccoli**

Sources of vitamin C:

- **Oranges**
- **Kiwi fruit**
- **Strawberries**
- **Broccoli**
- **Tomatoes**
- **Peppers**

Recommended dosage of vitamin D in children:

- **Birth to 1 year old (breastfed): Daily supplement containing 8.5 to 10 micrograms.**
- **Birth to 1 year old (formula fed): Should not be given any if they are having more than 500ml of formula a day.**
- **Children 1 to 4 years old: Should be having a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms.**

Supporting roles



When we think about supporting roles in the early years, carers and teachers come to mind. However, in terms of the 1000 days It should also include the role of the family, partners, health care professionals and anyone involved in supporting the mother, not just the baby.

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) (2021) suggest that some women lack support of any kind, and are at a higher risk of mental health problems. They believe that assessing women who lack support and recommend the appropriate care services may improve health outcomes for mothers and babies.

New Parent Support (NCT) (2021) state that a crucial part of a child's development is the first 1000 days of becoming a parent. The NCT go on to state that child health experts worldwide are unanimous that care given during the first 1000 days is more influential on a child's future than any other point in their life.

[First 1,000 Days | NCT](#)

FATHERS

Fatherhood Institute (NDA) believes it is important for professionals in social and health care to reach out to father's directly and not reach them via the mother's.. They believe this is the 'golden opportunity moment' for engagement, and that a father's attitude and behaviour impacts hugely on mothers and babies.

Capuozzo, Sheppard and Uba (2010) in addition say that research they have carried out verify what they have carried out previously. This being a father's involvement has a positive impact on a child's life, but when a father is absent, they saw a negative outcome.

Midwives and health visitors

Midwifery covers a range of support during pregnancy. It is important to have a good relationship, to work together and a midwife supports a mother in their choices. (NCT, 2017).

A health visitor works closely with midwives, practice nurses and GP's. They enable parents and support to raise a happy and healthy child. (Family support, 2019).

'The role of the adult is fundamental in taking children's learning forward'. (Keith, 2018).

Early year practitioners

Skills for schools (NDA) describe early years practitioners as specialists to supervise the social and educational growth of babies and young children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2007) Believe effective practitioners work by ensuring:

- Relationships with children and families are civil and attentive while concentrating on learning and achievement.
- Observing children delicately and responding fittingly to motivate and develop curiosity and learning.
- Observing and listening to what children like, when they are scared, frustrated and when they feel confident.
- They are at the same level as the child, can take their lead and direction.
- Are in a position to judge when a child is ready to be taught new skills.

[EYFS_Child_Development1.pdf\(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/EYFS_Child_Development1.pdf)

Cambridge dictionary (2022) defines Pedagogy as 'the study of the methods and activities of teaching. They also define curriculum as ' the subjects studies in a school/ college, etc.

ZERO to THREE (2022) have devised a training curriculum for early years practitioner's so they can learn to interact and enable a child's development from birth. [The Growing Brain: From Birth to 5 Years Old, A Training Curriculum for Early Childhood Professionals • ZERO TO THREE](#)

Enabling environments



'Adults can admire their environment; they can remember it and think about it - but a child absorbs it' (Montessori, 1967)

Nursery resources (2018) state that an enabling environment is key in a child's learning and development. In addition they say that an environment that acknowledges a child's individual needs through a caring and supportive surroundings gives way for them to discover and evolve.

Early years alliance (2019) likewise indicate, that to make an environment enabling, it should be diverse and plentiful. Where risks are carefully controlled and children are protected from harm. They say environments should be:

- Warm, welcoming and nurturing
- Promote communication
- Ignite curiosity
- Motivate to explore
- Take holistic approach

Enabling experiences



Enabling experiences should:

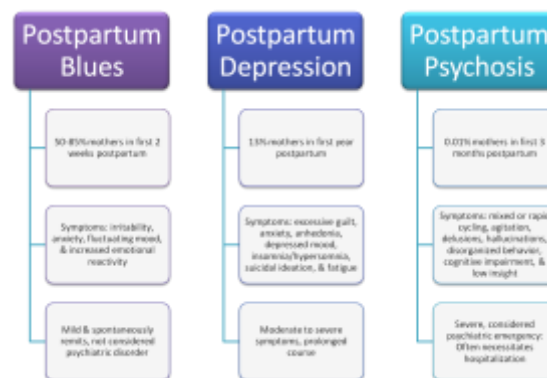
- Promote independence
- Offer challenging and opportunity to experience success
- Be the learners own choice
- Support holistic child development

Learning and teaching Scotland (2010) believe that outdoor and indoor spaces should offer stimulation and deliver opportunities to explore and be active. Children enjoy playing with objects that are real-life such as fruit, so that they can feel, taste and smell. This offers a holistic sensory experience along with rich language play.

Mental health



The Institute of Health Visiting (iHV) (2020) state that women feeling an array of emotions during the transition to parenthood is normal, and that over half experience '**baby blue**' symptoms. These being tearful, irritable and overwhelmed and such symptoms can last 10 days after birth. In addition, they follow on by advising an women experiencing symptoms should contact their health visitor, midwife or GP as they could be experiencing perinatal mental illness. Perinatal mental illness, can affect mothers and fathers/partners from all cultural backgrounds



Likewise Mikulak and Wolpert (2013) undertook a study by the University of California (UCLA). They believe that women who received strong social support from their families during their pregnancies, are less likely to experience depression after birth. They say receiving support protects mothers from a sharp increase in a particular stress hormone called **Placental Corticotrophic-Releasing Hormone (PCRH)** which means they are less likely to develop postpartum depression.

Mind, (2020) have an array of information about postnatal depression and perinatal mental health. They state that perinatal mental health problems can arise any time from conception and up to a year after giving birth.

Mind go on to list some perinatal mental health problems:

- Perinatal depression
- perinatal anxiety
- Perinatal OCD
- Perinatal psychosis
- Perinatal PTSD

In addition, some women also experience eating problems.

Mind- perinatal mental health

Mental health resources and helplines		
Support Line 020 8554 9804 Caroline 0845 122 8672 National Self-Harm Network 0800 422 6009 Anxiety Alliance 0845 746 7877 SOS Direct 0845 4647 Relieve 0845 456 9400 W 0207 840 3188 UK Perinatal 0800 888 0040 Anxiety UK 0844 775 774 Depression Alliance 0845 123 2320 B-eat Eating Disorder Association 08456 341 911 12 noon-5 pm 0206 Listening Voices 0845 122 86 41	Repsure UK 0333 333 5880 W 020 7451 6689 Young Minds For parents 0888 802 5044 Mon-Fri 1.30pm-4pm SPD World 08700 055 275 Mind 0845 744 0160 Self Injury Support British Crisis Centre for women 0888 800 8088 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre 0888 802 9199 www.helpline.com 1-800-GUIDING 1-888-784-2435 Teenline.org 714-437-8334 714 NEW-TEEN www.sociale.protection.statea.com 1-800-375-TALKS 1-800-375-8200 The Mix http://www.themix.org.uk/	ODD Action www.oddaction.org.uk/ Self Harm UK www.selfharm.co.uk/ Kooth kooth.com/ DuckDooz www.duckdooz.com Chat2Quality Chat2Gee http://salemarm.co.uk/ Recovery Show-Box Project www.recoveryshowbox.org/ Dana 0200 304 7005 Paygma 0800 9689991 DeWils.me 0800 1111

6 - List of contact numbers of different organisations.

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Image 1. Available at: image.slidesharecdn.com/chapter09-140915130826-phpapp02/95/chapter09-9-638.jpg?cb=1411195417 Accessed: 17 December 2021

Image 2.

Available at: <https://sway.office.com/s/tKWVQnTQnUelhmJx/images/ZufIPNI5Jd5Bc9?quality=320&allowAnimation=false> Accessed: 12 January 2022

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