



First 1000 days



Introduction

The first 1000 days are from the day of conception to a baby's 2nd birthday. The first 1000 days are vital in a baby's life, it consists of the mother's and baby's health, nutrition and the stress levels during pregnancy and when the baby is born, Pregnancy birth & baby (2022).

During the first 1000 days this is an opportune time to ensure a baby thrives in life. Within the first 1000 days is crucial for a baby's brain development as this is where it is forming, throughout the first 1000 days this is where a child's health is based, Thousand days (no date).

Nutrition

Bhatia, Bhutta and Kalhan (2012) States that from the date of conception through the 9 months in the mother's womb and the first 24 months of a child's life the health and growth development is a crucial time. Throughout this time the mother and baby receiving the correct amount of nutrition and health care is positive for neurodevelopment, growth and their learning development. Looking through the time of the first 1000 days if a baby is exposed to poor nutrition and health this could lead to poor brain development which in the future this could lead to the child having a cognitive development disorder with a substandard brain development these then could follow onto the child having a poor attendance within nursery or school, dropping out of education at an early stage and having a low skilled paid job in adult life therefore leading to poverty.

This is supported by the National Library of Medicine within the first 1000 days the mother and baby require a high level of care to ensure for a healthy lifestyle which will be supported by the baby being able to learn and develop throughout their life. There are 4 vital stages of nutrition throughout the first 1000 days

- *The 9 months of pregnancy to the birth of the baby - This is the mother receiving a healthy, balanced diet throughout her pregnancy in support for breastfeeding when the baby arrives

- *Birth to 6 months - Breastfeeding the baby until they reach 6 months old this is due to breast milk being able to meet the babies needs. Throughout the 6 months of breast feeding the breast milk changes to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the baby.

- *Six months to 12 months - This is the stage where you are encouraged to introduce solid foods to the baby, although breast milk or formula milk will still provide the baby with the nutrients it needs allowing the introduction of solid foods is seen as a progression.

- *12 months- This is the stage where the introduction to a wide selection of foods dropping the need for bottles and allowing the child to eat and drink on their own.

National Library of Medicine states that exclusively breast feeding your baby for the first 6 months of life is recommended although some mothers may come against some barriers in being able to breast feed these barriers could be the baby not being able to latch onto the mother and the mother not receiving enough help from medical experts, the mother may have medical issues which she may face and therefore unable to breast feed the baby this is supported by Welton as breast feeding may not be possible for every mother it is important to recognise there is another alternative of formula feeding. Formula feeding still provides the baby with the nutrients it requires within the first 6 months. There is a convenience to formula feeding where you can feed the baby anywhere and at any time, the added bonus to formula feeding is that any caregiver is able to feed the baby this can also be a suited to a nursery if the mother has returned to work and unable to express.

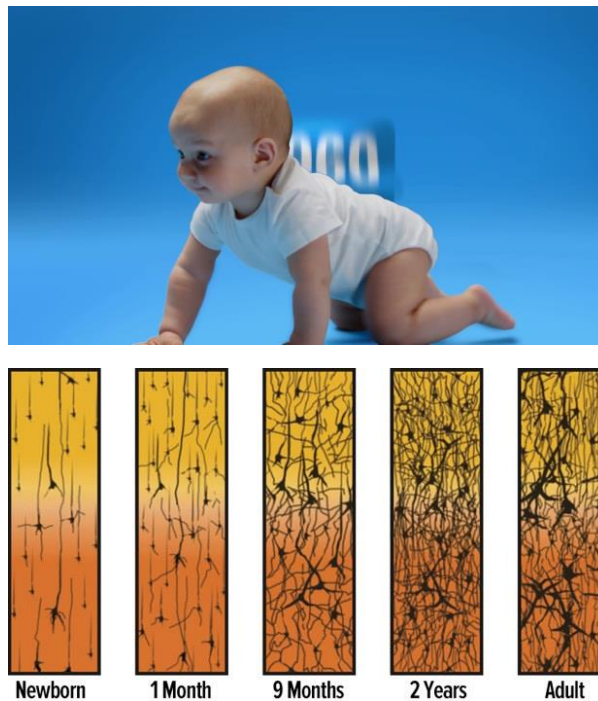


Brain Development

The first 1000 days of brain development is a crucial time to the neurons connected in the brain, from the date of conception through to the child's second birthday the brain will connect just as many neurons as an adult brain. Throughout the early stages of brain development the baby's genes form the way the neurons connect and play a big part on how they form. Although the genes form the connections the genes do not blueprint the brain itself. The environment that baby experiences encourages for neural action. The experiences a baby receives from using their senses allows for the neural activity to be stimulated allowing for further connections to be made. During pregnancy a baby is able to recognise the mother's voice if she is reading and singing to them while in the womb this allows for the baby to make connections once born and neurons can be activated more often. Newborns are able to recognise different emotions between happy and sad and are able to

recognize faces The Urban Child Institute. This is supported by United Nations Children's Fund who states *"In the first years of life, neurons in a child's brain form new connections at the astounding rate of 700 – 1,000 per second: a pace never repeated again."*

A child's future can be affected if connections are not made during the development in the first 1000 days.



Exceptional care within the first 1000 days

Pikler recognised exceptional care within the first 1000 days is to ensure babies build a secure attachment offering secure moments during vital times during the day feeding, changing and bathing allows for the growth of their development. Building secure trusting relationships allows for them to be recognised as a partner in the relationship. Allowing the baby to be a part of changing routines doing it with them and not to them. Once a carer shows a natural interest in the care being provided this allows for the baby to relax within this moment. Allowing for cooperation during these key care giving moments allows for respect and enjoyable moments for both the carer and baby The Pikler Approach. Professional association for childcare and early years supports this by stating within your settings to be able to provide a loving and nurturing environment will allow for children to build secure attachments with the key worker's. Within your setting caregivers attending to the children's needs with love provides them with respect and for them to know they are understood.

This is supported by Maria Robinson who supports secure attachments with the parent/caregiver and the baby. The baby is able to build up a memory of the parent/caregiver as showing them love and being attentive to their needs. When a secure attachment is formed the baby knows when they feel uncomfortable or upset that the parent/caregiver will come to their needs and they know the feeling will then go away. A baby is able to trust that adults will help them when they get upset, sad or anxious this allows for the emotional resilience to be built allowing for positive mental health, O'Connor.

"A child who is loved, encouraged, respected and comforted is able to learn about the world in a context of emotional safety, and about themselves as fundamentally lovable" Maria Robinson.



Enabling Environments



Within a setting promoting babies and children development and learning the environment needs to play a vital role. Allowing them to feel loved and relaxed promotes play in enabling environments. Enabling environments allow for children to explore, use their senses feel secure and safe Early Years

Matters. This is supported by Hodgman who states providing children with stimulating environments, challenging them allowing them to explore naturally and experiment. Allowing children to communicate with others, allowing them to take risks and make mistakes. Promoting a positive attitude towards learning, helping children to develop, providing them with a safe environment and offering emotional support.

The Curiosity Approach values the environment as the 3rd teacher to the children, by offering children with plentiful physical experiences influences how they learn. Allowing children to direct their play by offering them with open-ended resources, the resources you offer within your setting using loose parts which have no fixed purpose allowing the imagination to use it in any way possible. Allowing children to use curiosity within their play and valuing their space.

"Curiosity is the spark that ignites all learning" Curiosity Approach (2021)

This linking well with the Steiner approach which supports children with rich real life experiences taking the child as whole. Looking at their emotional, physical cultural, intellectual and spiritual needs and working parallel with the child's development.

Froebel looks at play as the way in which children understand the world around them, by offering children rich learning environments both inside and outside allows them to learn through nature.

"play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in the child's soul." Froebel.

Supporting this Froebel states that looking at the child's development through their physical development, health, emotional well being, the environment considers the child as a whole.

Allowing children to engage and experience nature through play gives first hand experiences, understanding the world around them connecting with the world around them looking and feeling different textures, listening to the birds sing, looking at the way the wind changes the world around us and watching the rain drops fall. By allowing babies and children to experience things first hand enhances their knowledge.



1 - Source: [Image] Curiosity Approach (no date)



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2 - Source: [Video] Rachael's Playhouse (2023)

Enabling Adults



Within a setting a key person's role is important to support the babies and children's needs this enables them to thrive knowing there are people around them supporting them, respecting them and responding to their needs. Showing children you are attentive to their needs will show through within their progress of personal, social and emotional development. A key person is there to be a role model to the children modelling positivity. It is the role of the key person to observe the children within their care getting to know their likes and interests and planning around this. It is also the role of the key person to feedback to the parents/carers about their child's day within the setting, feeding back about personal care routines feeding, sleeping etc updating the parent/carer about their child's development and progress within the setting PACEY.

Froebel developed his first nursery in 1837 he could see the importance the role of the adult played within helping children gain a sense of belonging, working with children on the same level and helping them empower their self-esteem. The importance of Froebel's nurseries to allow children to move freely, explore through their play allowing them to make choices, problem solve, make their own interests known.

Froebel stated adults who allow themselves to embrace nature, are naturally curious, who are blissful allows them to feed a joyous energy into the children and take in the beauty of the natural world around us.

The new curriculum for funded non maintained settings supports the positive role of the adult building environments for children that are emotionally safe, role modelling positive behaviour and helping children regulate their feelings. Within a setting it is important all adults provide a positive approach to learning providing the children with endless opportunities and encouraging their natural curiosity, standing back and providing teachable moments naturally when we are invited into their play. Within your setting bringing the community in and allowing the children to have a sense of

belonging with the experiences provided for them. It is important for adults to display kindness and supporting children with the daily routines of the setting.

Practitioners within the setting observe children's interests and the current likes and are able to set up invitations to play, including the children's input within the invitations taking a holistic approach supporting all babies and children.

Within in the new curriculum for Wales there are five developmental pathways

- *belonging
- *communication
- *exploration
- *physical development
- *well-being

Adults there fore need to support and promote the 5 developmental pathways within the setting this will ensure by taking an holistic approach to the care we provide allows for children to develop the skills they require and supporting their development. All children are different and it is important the adults support this appreciating children develop at different stages, with observations and time allows them to learn at their pace.

Within the new curriculum a sense of belonging for children plays an important role 'Cynefin' the welsh word for belonging. Within settings it is important for children to feel they are a part of the setting and that they belong within the community around them. Embracing the culture around us and recognising we are a part of this wonderful country, bringing the outside into your setting PACEY.



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3 - Source: [Video] Rachael's Playhouse (2022)



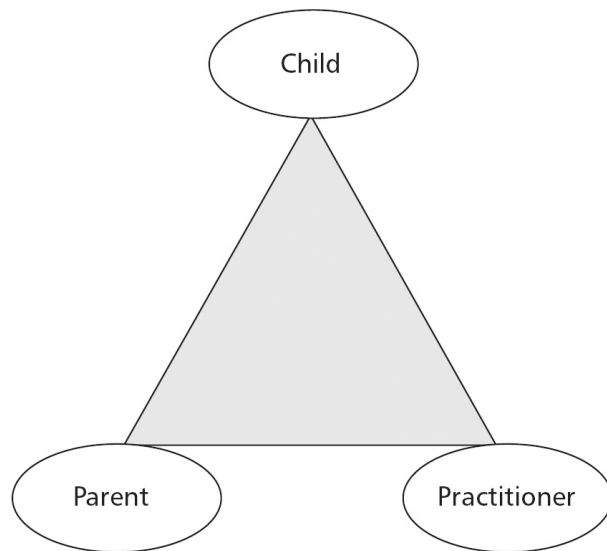
4 - Source: [Image] Pacey (no date)

Effective Partnerships



Birth to 5 matters supports effective partnerships within the setting between the parents/carers and the staff it is important to recognise the parents/carers as the first people that will have a wealth of knowledge of the babies and children entering our care. It is important to welcome all families into your setting and involve them in their child's development. When families and settings work together in partnership this allows for the child to thrive it supports the child's needs and for them to be respected within the setting. Ward sees the effective partnerships within a setting with the parents the setting and the child as a triangle shown in the image below, the triangle is seen as the child at the top of the triangle and the setting and parents at the bottom working together for the benefit of the child. This is supported by Gasper who states to gain trust with your families in your setting this needs to be fundamental from the start it is important all staff are approachable at the setting so they are able to build the strong bonds with the families in their care. Staff members need to work with parents/carers to ensure the child's development is at the forefront. It is important staff members communicate with the parents/carers on a daily basis given in depth details of their child's day. It is important the setting ensures the values and respect is embedded from the start of the relationship and it is mutual both ways.

Multi-agency working within a setting is important to fully support the families and children within your care Cheminais supports this by stating working with agencies and your community fully supporting the families and children in your setting and offering collaborative partnership places the child at the heart of everything. Partnership working supports the child's well-being and allows for their learning to be improved and fully supported. This is supported by PACEY who states working with professionals within your setting supports the children's development and offers a first class service to your families.



International Approaches

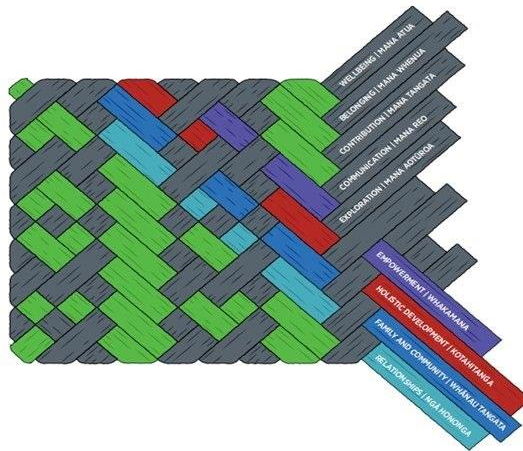


Te-Whariki



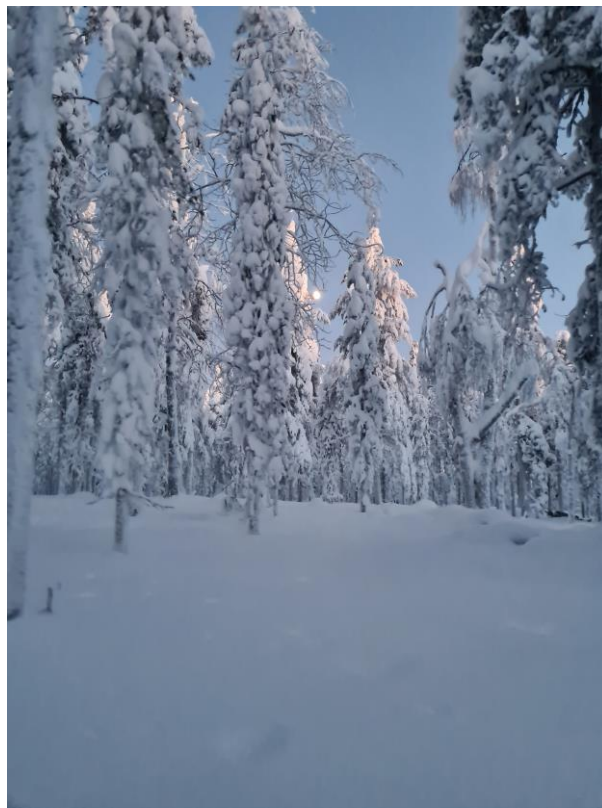
Te-Whariki theory - all children have access to early education building strong relationships and underpinning a flourishing love for learning for their later life, they see all children are born with colossal potential. Babies and children are able to build strong relationships with the early years and benefit from a rich environment of learning. Te-Whariki vision is that all children flourish to be confident individuals who have their own identity, embrace their culture and language. Within this approach all children are encouraged to embrace their likes and interests and are supported by key individuals who have a strong passion to supporting these children. Within Te-Whariki the curriculum within early years is displayed for all as a 'woven mat' the mat comprises of The Principles and The Strands which both intertwine with each other they support the children's well-being, empowers them and gives them a sense of belonging - there are many more aspects to the woven mat as shown in the picture. Early years educators work with each other, the children and families empowering the children and ensuring they receive high quality care - this is the heart of Te-Whariki.

Within the Te-Whariki children will learn how to form friendships, play and explore, be courageous and try new things, think and problem solve, begin to understand and make sense of the world around them and many more. Children are empowered, they have a holistic development to their learning, the children's families are brought into the setting taking part in their learning experience, they look at the environment around them and the people and use this to build positive relationships.



5 - Source: [Image] Sightlines-Initiative (no date)

Finland



6 - Source: [Image] Samantha Dunn (2023)

Within the country of Finland the education system and early years is very different to the UK, World Economic Forum states that when a baby is born within Finland all mothers are provided with a 'baby box' this tradition has been on-going since the 1930s the baby box provides the parents with the essentials they require - clothes, care products and the babies first reading book, the box is then used as a cot for the baby.

The early childhood education within Finland is to support all babies and children and lay a foundation for learning, it supports children with an holistic approach, supports their learning and provides them with a safe space for learning, Finnish National Agency for education.

Finnish Early Education is based on lifelong learning for their children. Children get to experience the world around them in child led settings. Kindie days supports this by looking at the kindergartens within Finland, children experience first hand learning through exploration and play. Children are encouraged to play freely with their peers and independently, children get to experience digital play, social play, creative play, free play and active play. Throughout the day in nursery children experience the outdoors in all weathers, the staff and children are prepared for all 4 seasons with the correct clothing they experience the forest, parks and lakes within the wonderful scenery that is Finland. Using their creativity and imagination through their play using the natural resources around them focusing on nature and the world around us. The nurseries have excellent partnerships with parents involving them in their child's day and development while at the nursery, staff work closely with other professionals therapists, nurses, teachers and special education teachers truly looking after the child's well-being this is to ensure each child's receives the best possible care. Within the nurseries you will see children from the ages of 1-6 playing together this allows for the younger babies to look up to the older children and allowing for the older children to show their care and compassion for the younger ages this is a Finnish Pedagogy providing children opportunities to mix with different ages allowing for fantastic orientation - the older children being role models to the babies being able to lead through example and taking on responsibilities allowing them to feel empowered.

Children are encouraged to use their 5 senses within holistic environments, striving to develop their mental, emotional, physical and social skills using their 5 senses children are taught to regulate their feelings and emotions. Children are encouraged to express their feelings through emotions and build positive ways to balance these.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clNIF2zRyxM>





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