

Lois Duffy
ECEY4005
Word count-3141

Exceptional
care within the
first 1000
days.



UNICEF, (2019)

Introduction

The first 1000 days of a young person's life is such a crucial time, In fact Columbia university (2023) implies that it's possible that you are unable to remember the most important time in your life. The first 1000 days of your existence are too brief for you to have many memories from, yet they will shape who you become as an adolescent and an adult. Disparities are visible in children before the age of three and affect healthcare, access to essentials, and environmental experiences, all of which influence behaviour, cognition, and health. Racial and structural inequality also affects these areas.

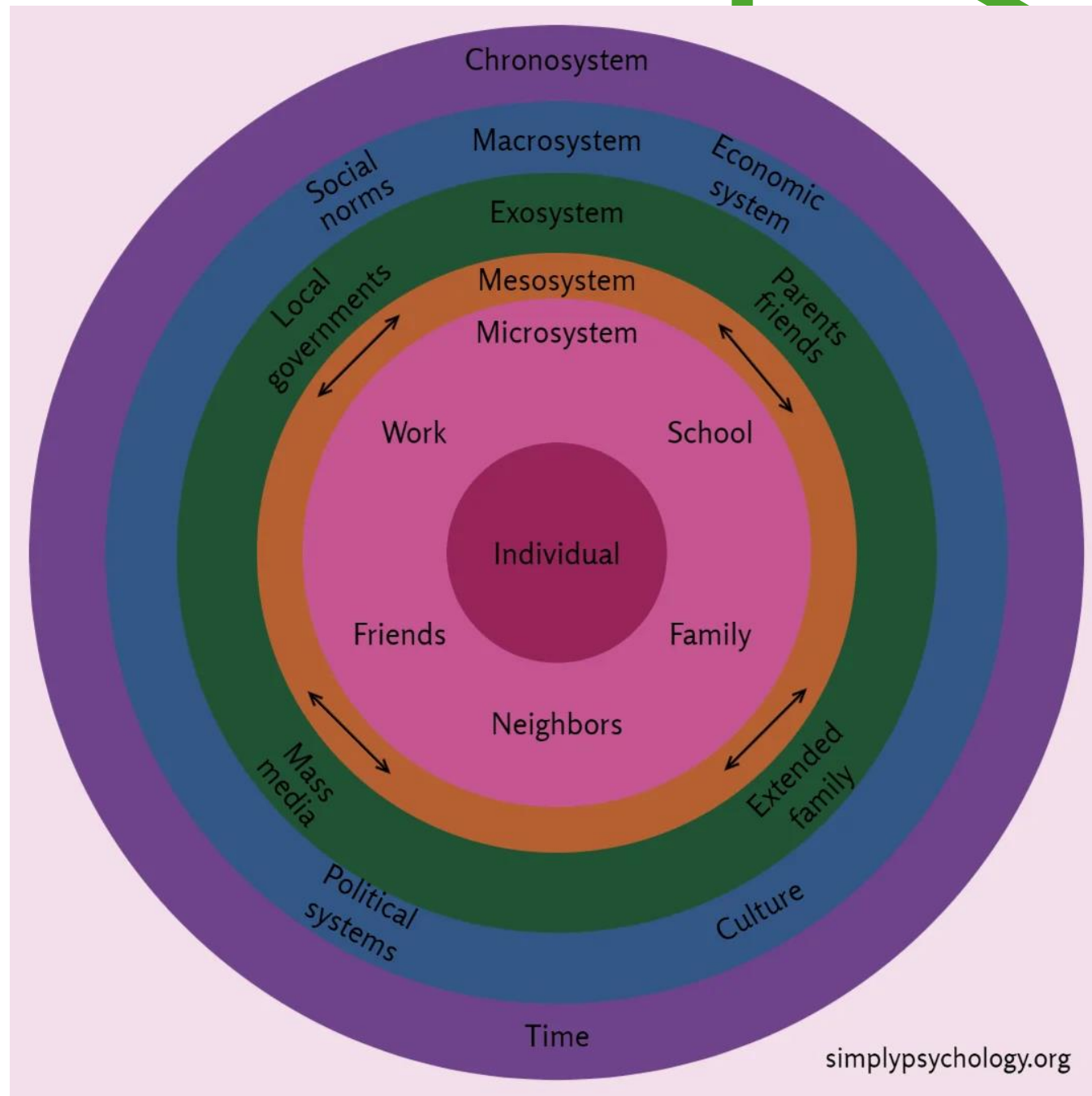


Lighting up young brains (2016).

Challenges within the first 1000 days

A real challenge in the early years career path is staff retention, Campbell (2019) states that the early year's practitioners' sector have one of the highest staff turnover and recruitment figures are much lower in other workplaces. This is due to low pay, long hours and over worked staff. This is also supported by Lawler (2020) who also agrees that it was shown that early childhood educators put in greater hours than workers in comparable sectors; 11% of full-time educators worked more than 42 hours per week, compared to only 3% of retail employees, at a less wage. Early years practitioners work several hours per week to fulfil the needs of parents who need the support, yet working continuously isn't good for practitioners and are at risk of being burnt out. Family (no date) agrees that although we try to fulfil the needs of others, childcare practitioners are all too inclined to burn out, it could be caused by low pay, over worked, or stress from outside the setting, but practitioners need to have a good work and life balance to be able to maintain healthy, and fit to work alongside children. If there is a high staff turnover, what effect would this most likely have on the children of the setting? Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological systems theory shows us that nurseries and early years staff are in the microsystem, this indicates that a child is very reliant on the enabling adult in the setting, if they have formed a close bond, the child knows they are secure and feel comfortable, the turnover of staff may affect the child to feel unsafe, lonely, cause distress and interrupt their learning.

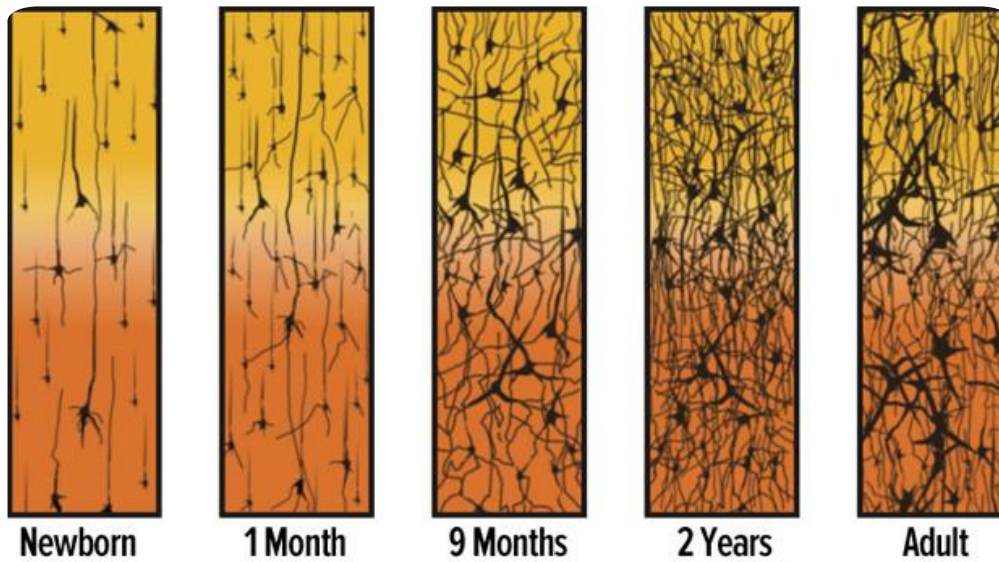




Guy-Evans, O.
(2023).

While children are learning and developing through their early years setting there is always a curriculum to adhere to, this is to ensure that children are meeting their milestones and developing. GOV.UK (2022) state that a curriculum is what you would like the children to learn within their time in an early years setting. While adhering to the curriculum set in place for Wales, the practitioner should also find ways to present the curriculum in a more unique way, that the children in their setting will interact with, this could be used in forms of engaging experiences, setting the scene for learning, play based activities and outdoor learning. While obeying to a curriculum can be useful there can also be a disadvantage to a curriculum. Over many years there has been many different techniques to approach the development of children and what is the best way for children to progress and be the best versions of themselves. Harford, s. (2017) states that many people doubt the curriculum for being an essential part of learning, but without the curriculum children will have learnt too little and will have made very little development progress. Having practitioners that do not adhere to the curriculum can reflect a bad look on the setting and can cause divergence with staff members, causing the environment to be uncomfortable for the children.





The Urban Child Institute
(2009)

The Urban Child Institute (2009) published a photo that shows the development of an infant's brain neurons, right up until adolescence, as you can clearly see at 2 years of age an infant almost has the same number of neurons as a fully developed adult.

Lighting up young brains (2016) states that the brain of a child develops while still in the womb. An estimated 86 billion neurons, or information-processing cells, make up an adult's fully developed brain. However, the bulk of them are genuinely created in the womb (Goswami 2015, Herculano-Houzel 2009). Then, in early life, the relationships between neurons grow larger and more solid, and new connections start to emerge. According to Stiles & Jernigan (2010), these relationships make up the networks that support children's growth. Nevertheless, these networks are not as strongly linked when a child is born.

The development of the brain is not just genetic; it also depends on the holistic development of the child, the parents' and carers around them, and how they interact with the child. Lighting up young brains (2016) strongly agrees that parents/ care givers should use eye-contact and associate with objects to allow the baby to understand what words mean. Allowing association with sounds and objects is what encourages babies to say their first words.

Lighting up young brains (2016) also suggests that at home learning plays a key role in the development of infants. The characteristics of a high-quality home learning environment are not easily defined. Nonetheless, studies indicate that it should offer the experiences and surroundings that an infant would engage with in order for their brains and linguistic abilities to grow. There should be an abundance of books available, as well as chances to read aloud and learn rhymes, sing along to songs, and be read to.

The impact of covid-19 had on Infants and toddlers

As we already know, covid was a very unpredictable time, limited social interaction, and had a financial effect on many families. How do you think this affected infants/ toddlers? The impact of covid on babies during lockdown can vary. Some babies may have missed out on social interactions and developmental opportunities, while others may have benefitted from spending time with their parents.

Costa, P., Cruz, A. C., Alves, A., Rodrigues, M. C., & Ferguson, R. (2022) states that it is important for parents to create a nurturing environment and provide stimulating activities for their babies.

Most young families suffered financially when covid hit, many parents made redundant, increased expenses, all while caring for a young baby these circumstances can be difficult.

Thankfully the government were offering support during this tough time.

Engl, C.H.T.S.L.S. 9NA L.P.O. 3267 5144 O. 928 975, Scotl, W. 20 586 then 097 or 098 or 099 and 0131 310 1122 (no date) states that the government set up a scheme to help young families during this period, who met the criteria. This scheme helped with necessities such as, food, rent and bills.



Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia is a well-known theorist who believes in the image of the child, that the teacher is the learner, and that 'the third teacher' is the environment.

Valentine, M. (2023) Strongly suggests that Reggio viewed the child as having full potential and not just having needs that needed to be fulfilled. This meant that she believed that the children were the leaders and allowed them to engage and lead in the environment which is their third teacher

While following the curriculum. Berg, V. (2023) states that Reggio also believed that teachers are also learners and should observe the way the children lead and reflect on the learning environment and that all the tools and materials in the classroom and other spaces are stimulating and welcoming, encouraging children to think creatively and outside the box.



Emmi Pikler



The Montessori family.
(no date)

Emmi Pikler is a theorist who strongly believed in respectful approach to infant and childcare, Pikler believed that if we gave children enough free movement and independence they would move as expected. Teach Early Years. (2020) suggests that Pikler believed in encouraging children to speak new languages, and that responding to a child's needs as they arise.

Today in 2024 there is now a climbing frame designed for children that is named after Emmi Pikler, called the Pikler Triangle, this is to encourage infants to freely move and pull themselves up on.

Sensory activities

As children grow and develop it is always important that they are engaging in activities, such as using their five senses. Some great activities can be allowing them to play with sensory bins/ bottles, listening and singing along to music, feeling and tasting different textured foods, outdoor play such as mud kitchens and water-based play, watching LED lights and different sensory experiences. Educational, B. (2022) recognizes that sensory play is very beneficial for children, as adults we use our 5 sense's almost everyday to make life decisions, learning how to recognize them 5 senses and understand them is an essential and beneficial for children. Action for children (2022) also suggests that it can be very rewarding to brain development and allows children to understand how their actions affect what's around them, also enhancing memory and can be good practice for developing fine motor skills ready for when it comes to learn how to hold a pen.



Images of sensory activities



Action for children.
(2022)



Action for children.
(2022)

Action for
children. (2022)



Stimulating environments inside and outside



(kane,2013)



(kane,2013)



ItsySparks
(2014)



ItsySparks
(2014)

Stimulating environments are essential for infants, stimulating activities are things like reading books and talking about the pictures, playing with sensory toys such as textured balls or squishy blocks, singing or doing finger plays, going on nature walks, or engaging in pretend play. Stimulating activity helps promote healthy brain development, enhances cognitive skills, enhances cognitive skills, and fosters creativity. It also supports social and emotional growth, language development, and fine and gross motor skills. Welsh Government. (2022) The indoor and outdoor environments we design for children should be essential to their real-life experiences. We should therefore continuously assess the environment's efficacy and make necessary adjustments. Exploration of the surroundings is a major factor in early development. Children learn to appreciate the world around them and feel a feeling of belonging via exploring their surroundings.



Engaging activities



Natural
Start (2019)



Natural
Start (2019)



Natural
Start (2019)

Engaging activities

Welsh Government. (2022) states that in the early years, we should provide hands-on, meaningful, and intentional experiences for the children. Along the learning process, they must promote children's independence and provide risk, challenge, and possibilities for achievement. To engage children in deep levels of participation and prolonged periods of continuous active learning, they should be based in real-life, realistic circumstances. Engaging experiences are experiences that capture a child's imagination and curiosity. Experiences such as visiting museums, learning about new animals, outdoor adventures, participating in singing and dancing, and activities that really get a child's attention. Welsh Government. (2022) suggest that there are many benefits to engaging activities, they help enhance their cognitive, physical, and social skills. By providing stimulating activities, children could explore, experiment, and problem- solve which promotes critical thinking and creativity. Engaging activities also support language and communication development, as well as fine and gross motor skills. Moreover, these activities foster a love for learning and help children develop positive attitude towards education. Overall, engaging activities in the early years lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning and development.



(EYFS Activities: Five ways to engage... A very active child (no date)

Respectful care

Respectful care within early years is treating children with kindness, empathy, and understanding. It involves recognizing and valuing their individuality, emotions, and needs. Some key aspects of respectful care are active listening, positive communication, respectful language, setting boundaries, encouraging autonomy, providing nurturing and responsive care, respecting emotions, and promoting independence. By practicing respectful care, we create a nurturing and supportive environment that allows children to thrive and develop a strong sense of self. Jone Sagastui, Elena Herrán, & M. Teresa Anguera. (2020) state that Emmi pikler is a very knowledgeable theorist who believes that respectful care should be a key factor when caring for infants, she understood the importance of treating children with dignity and respect, she emphasised the significant of allowing children to develop at their own pace, promoting their independence, and fostering a sense of trust and security. By providing a nurturing and respectful environment, Pikler believed that children could grow and flourish in a way that honoured their individuality.



Tassoni, P. (2018)

While showing respectful care you can also show the children you are also an enabling adult, someone they can find trust and comfort in.

Welsh Government. (2022) believes that we are responsible to show we understand that our contribution is essential to every child's development and is especially important at this early learning stage. We need to establish the foundations for learning by generating environment that are emotionally secure and help children start expressing and controlling their emotions and actions in healthy ways. In addition to encouraging and supporting children's natural curiosity, we should provide an example of joyous learning and make the most of the instructional moments that arise when we watch or participate in their playtime. We can also establish a secure relationship with parents/ carers to allow the child to know we are a safe environment, and to make connection with their community so they feel a sense of belonging.

To do this we need to show we are being consistent with respectful care, support their choices and decisions, helping them prepare for daily transitions and make best use of learning opportunities during their daily routines.



Inclusive

Being inclusive is incredibly important in the early years setting, for both infants and parents/ carers. It means creating an environment where every child and family feels valued, respected and included, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or differences. Welsh Government. (2022) states that inclusive practice with our pedagogical approach can assure children and parents/ carers that they have a strong sense of belonging and are signified in our setting. to be inclusive in activities we could be to do cultural activities where we are to talk about where we come from and what holidays we celebrate, or to adjust activities so that they accessible for all children, so that all the children have the equal opportunity to thrive within the setting.

Being inclusive is so important to adjust for the needs of others.



Mile High Early Learning (no date).

International approaches

International forest schools offer a wide range of benefits for young children. They provide opportunities for hands-on learning in a natural environment, which can enhance their physical, cognitive, and social development. Loughborough university (no date) states that the idea of the "Forest School" first appeared in Scandinavia, where schools host outdoor programmes that help children develop their confidence, self-worth, and problem-solving and cooperative abilities in local wooded settings. Loughborough university (no date) state in the video that they see a great improvement in the children's confidents and that the benefits are that the children show their appreciation for outdoors and the environment around them, they see this as a positive experience in their daily routine.

Williams-Sieghfredsen, J. (2020) states that the main difference between forest school in Scandinavia and education in the UK lies in their approach to learning and the environment in which it takes place. Forest school in Scandinavia, places a strong emphasis on outdoor education and nature-based learning. Children spend a significant amount of time in natural settings, engaging in hands-on activities and exploring the environment. This approach aims to foster a deep connect with nature and develop ecological literacy.



<https://youtu.be/9zat9ef1vHo?t=3>

Whereas Welsh Government. (2022) states that on the other hand, UK education typically follows a more traditional classroom-based approach. While outdoor learning is encouraged, it may not be as integrated or structured as in Forest school in Scandinavia. However, there are Forest school in the UK that have adopted the Scandinavian model, providing similar nature-based learning experiences.

Both approaches have their unique strengths and benefit. Forest school in Scandinavia promotes a strong connection to nature and emphasizes experimental learning, while UK education focuses on a broader curriculum as classroom-based instruction. Ultimately, the choice between the two depends on personal preferences and educational goals.



Reference list

Action for Children. (2022) What is sensory play and why is it important? Available at:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/what-is-sensory-play-and-why-is-it-important/#:~:text=Sensory%20play%20is%20a%20lot,complex%20tasks%20and%20problem%20solving.>

Babies Born During Pandemic's First Year Score Slightly Lower on a Developmental Screening Test (2021) Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Available at: <https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/babies-born-during-pandemics-first-year-score-slightly-lower-developmental-screening-test>.

Berg, V. (2023). *The Reggio Emilia Approach to early years education*. [online] Daynurseries.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.daynurseries.co.uk/advice/the-reggio-emilia-approach-to-early-years-education#SnippetTab>. Accessed on: (3 January 2024)

Campbell, J (2019) '*retention in the early years and why it matters*' available at: my.optimus-education.com accessed on: 5 December 2023.

Columbia university (2020) '*what's important about the first 1000 days of life?*' available at: scienceandsociety.columbia.edu accessed on: (4 January 2024.)

Columbia University Irving Medical Centre. (2021). *Babies Born During Pandemic's First Year Score Slightly Lower on a Developmental Screening Test*. [online] Available at: <https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/babies-born-during-pandemics-first-year-score-slightly-lower-developmental-screening-test>.

Costa, P., Cruz, A. C., Alves, A., Rodrigues, M. C., & Ferguson, R. (2022). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young children and their caregivers. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 48(6), 1001–1007. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/10.1111/cch.12980>

Educational, B. (2022). *Sensory Play In EYFS: 25 Amazing Activity Ideas For You To Try*. [online] Blossom Educational. Available at: <https://blossomeducational.com/blog/sensory-play-in-the-early-years-25-amazing-activity-ideas-for-you-to-try/>.

Engl, C.H.T.S.L.S. 9NA L.P.O. 3267 5144 O. 928 975, Scotl, W. 20 586 then 097 or 098 or 099 and 0131 310 1122 (no date) *New winter package to provide further support for children and families*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-winter-package-to-provide-further-support-for-children-and-families>.

EYFS Activities: Five ways to engage... A very active child (no date) *Nursery World*. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/eyfs-activities-five-ways-to-engage-a-very-active-child> (Accessed: 17 January 2024). [image]

Forest School can develop early learning skills (no date) *www.youtube.com*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/9zat9ef1vHo> (Accessed: 15 January 2024).

gov.uk (2019) *approval for new trial to prevent group b step in newborn babies* . Edited by department of health and social care. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/approval-for-new-trial-to-prevent-group-b-strep-in-newborn-babies> (Accessed: 10 January 2024).

GOV.UK (2022) *Curriculum planning - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK, help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/get-help-to-improve-your-practice/curriculum-planning> (Accessed: 9 January 2024)

Guy-Evans, O. (2023). *Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory*. [online] Simply Psychology. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>. [image] [accessed 14 Jan 2024.]

Harford, S. (2017) *Ofsted's findings about the school curriculum - Ofsted blog: schools, early years, further education and skills, Blog.gov.uk*. Available at: <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2017/10/11/ofsteds-findings-about-the-school-curriculum/> (Accessed on: 9 January 2024)

How can we avoid burnout in early education? / *Family* (no date) www.family.co. Available at: <https://www.family.co/blog/avoiding-burnout-early-years-child-care> Accessed on (9 January 2024) *Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood | Mile High Early Learning* (no date). Available at: <https://milehighearlylearning.org/inclusive-practices-in-early-childhood/> (Accessed: 17 January 2024).

ItsySparks (2014) *Sensory Stimulation Activities for Babies - ItsySparks, itsysparks.com*. Available at: <https://itsysparks.com/sensory-stimulation-activities-babies/> (Accessed: 16 January 2024).

Jone Sagastui, Elena Herrán, & M. Teresa Anguera. (2020). A Systematic Observation of Early Childhood Educators Accompanying Young Children's Free Play at Emmi Pikler Nursery School: Instrumental Behaviors and Their Relational Value. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01731> (Accessed: 14 January 2024)

kane, kaitlyn (2013) *welcome to my outdoor classroom blogs*. Available at: <https://outdoorforestclassrooms.weebly.com/sensory-spaces> (Accessed: 16 January 2024).

Lawler, R (2020) 'report says childcare workers are underpaid, overworked and undervalued'. Available at: www.eyalliance.org.uk accessed on[05/01/2023.]

Lighting up young brains (2016). Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/lighting-up-young-brains.pdf>.

MD, C.M. (2022). *Pandemic challenges may affect babies — possibly in long-lasting ways*. [online] Harvard Health. Available at: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/pandemic-challenges-may-affect-babies-possibly-in-long-lasting-ways-202201132668> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2024].

Richards JE, Conte S. (2020) Brain Development in Infants: Structure and Experience. In: Lockman JJ, Tamis-LeMonda CS, eds. *The Cambridge Handbook of Infant Development: Brain, Behavior, and Cultural Context*. Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2020:94-127.
doi:10.1017/9781108351959.004

Teach Early Years. (2020). *The Pikler Approach: Part 1 | Under 2's*. [online] Available at: <https://www.teachearlyyears.com/under-2s/view/the-pikler-approach-part-1>. Accessed on (13 January 2024)

The Urban Child Institute (2009) *Baby's Brain Begins Now: Conception to Age 3*, [urbanchildinstitute.org](http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org). Available at: <http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain>. [imageUNICEF (2022) 'early moments matter' available at: www.unicef.org accessed: (4 January 2023)

valentine, M. (2023). *The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Years Education*. [online] education.gov.scot. Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/resources/the-reggio-emilia-approach-to-early-years-education/>. (Accessed on 13 January 2024)

Vanella, S. (2016) *What To Look For In A Montessori School*, Montessori Rocks. Available at: <https://montessorirocks.org/what-to-look-for-in-a-montessori-school/>. (4 January 2024)

Welsh Government. (2022) Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/b1801d78-38c3-4320-9818-d9996c21aef8/220914-a-curriculum-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings.pdf> (Accessed: 8 January 2024)

What is the Pikler triangle & is it Montessori? – The Montessori Family (no date). Available at: <https://themontessorifamily.com/what-is-the-pikler-triangle-is-it-montessori/> (Accessed: 13 January 2024).

Williams-Siegfriedsen, J. (2020) *Danish Forest Schools, Teach Early Years*. Teach Early Years Magazine. Available at: <https://www.teachearlyyears.com/enabling-environments/view/danish-forest-schools>.

Study reveals how Forest Schools can benefit children's development (no date) *Loughborough University*. Available at: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2017/october/study-reveals-forest-school-benefits/>. (Accessed: 13 January 2024)

Tassoni, P. (2018) *EYFS Best Practice: All about... care routines*, Nursery World. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/Features/article/eyfs-best-practice-all-about-care-routines>. (Accessed: 17 January 2024)

| *Natural Start* (2019) *Natural Start*. Available at: <https://naturalstart.org/feature-stories/engaging-children-stem-education-early>. (Accessed: 7 January 2024)