

The First 1000 Days.



Viam clinic, 2022

The first 1000 days



The first 1000 days of a child's life is from the moment they are conceived up until the age of 2 which is most important for developing the baby's immune system, brain and body. During pregnancy, the mother's health and nutrition and stress levels have significant impacts on a baby's growth and development and even life-long impacts, Pregnancy Birth and baby

(no date). Nutrition during a child's first 1,000 days of life lays the groundwork for their growth, along with stable, responsive relationships with carers and safe, supportive environments.

A child's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development may suffer in the absence of one or more of these supports, depriving them of opportunities that are fundamental to every child.



As stated in the Marmot review (2009), A child's early experiences establish the framework for their entire life. Early physical, social, and cognitive development of a kid has a significant impact on their level of knowledge and preparation for school, as well as their health and economic involvement. The health and well-being of a mother have a significant impact on a baby's development even before birth. Poorer long-term health and educational outcomes are specifically linked to low birth weight. Adult health is impacted by the settings in utero, as evidenced by the research on "foetal programming." Barker (1998), for example, has demonstrated that human fetuses irreversibly alter their structure and metabolism to adapt to a limited supply of nutrients. These alterations could be the starting point for several health conditions later in life, such as hypertension, diabetes, stroke, and coronary heart disease. Evidence suggests that maternal health and socioeconomic level are related, and low birth weight is linked to worse long-term health consequences. Low birth weight babies are especially more common to be born to impoverished mothers.

The importance of the first 1000 days in a video.



<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=8c848752da256d91jmltdHM9MTcwNTc5NTlwMCZpZ3VpZD0yNzY3ZWFlbMC04Y2E3LTU5MDItMWI4Zi1mOTBiOGQxYzY4NTcmaW5zaWQ9NTQ5Ng&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=2767eaa0-8ca7-6902-1b8f-f90b8d1c6857&u=a1L3ZpZGVvcy9yaXZlcnZpZXcvcmVsYXRlZHZpZGVvp3E9dGhlK3JvbGUrb2YrcHJhY3RpdGlvbVYcytpbit0aGUrZmlyc3QrMTAwMCTkYXlzM1pZD01Q0RGnkQxMjFFOTNCQUZFNDNFMzVDREY2RDEyMUU5M0JBRkUOMOUzJkZPUk09VkISRQ&ntb=1>

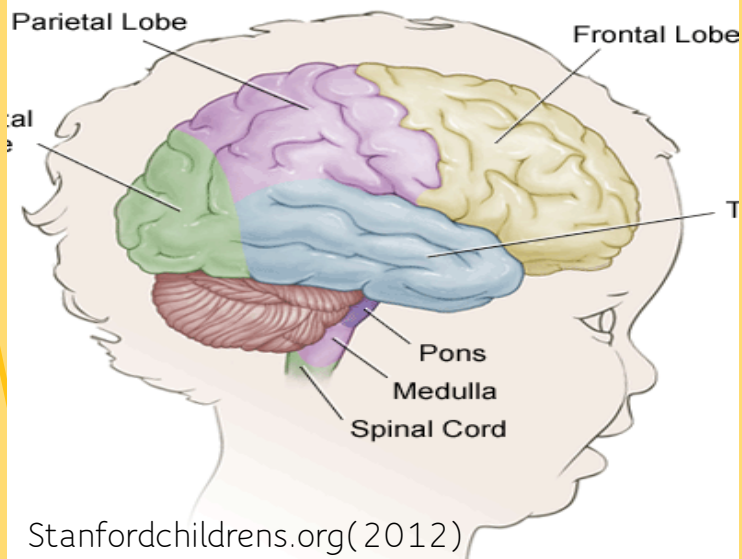
Adverse childhood experiences are more likely to occur when there is parental conflict, substance or alcohol abuse and mental health issues. These actions and situations undermine a parent's capacity to engage with their child and build a strong bond—a crucial aspect of a baby's development of a secure attachment.

Failure to develop attachments in the early years can have long term impacts on a child's future relationships.

The way an infant or toddler interacts with their parents or other caregivers affects how their stress hormones are controlled. Children with more stable connections have better regulation of their stress hormone levels. Children who experience fewer stable relationships have less controlled stress responses. As a result, there are higher hormone levels, which may change brain circuitry in ways that impair children's ability to handle stress as they become older. (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2008).



Anatomy of the Brain



Knickmeyer (2008) explained that a fully grown adults' brain has 86 million neurons, the majority of which are developed whilst in the womb. By the age of 1, a baby's brain is 72% of adult's volume and by the age of 2 it is 83% of the size of an adult's brain.



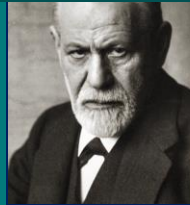
Babies use their murmuring, facial expressions, and gestures as a natural way to seek attention from the adults around them, through a process called 'serve and return', adults respond to the baby with sounds and movements. The process plays a vital role in the development of a baby's brain wiring. (*The Best Start for Life A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report*, no date)

Brain development

Exceptional care

Attachments in the early stages are a fundamental part of the development of the child. During the early stages of life, babies form attachments with their primary care givers. An attachment is a psychological and emotional connection between 2 beings. Usually, the primary caregiver within the first few weeks of life, Bowlby(1997). Sigmund Freud (1905) theory of love suggests a strong attachment is formed when a primary caregiver positively responds to the instinctual needs of a child. For example, feeding when hungry or changing a nappy when needed. These positive responses allows trust to develop as the baby is aware they will have their basic needs met by the caregiver.

Sigmund Freud (1905) theory of love suggests a strong attachment is formed when a primary caregiver positively responds to the instinctual needs of a child. For example, feeding when hungry or changing a nappy when needed. These positive responses allows trust to develop as the baby is aware they will have their basic needs met by the caregiver.



Within educational settings it is vital that key workers develop strong relationships with each individual child. Respectful and exceptional care relates to practitioners getting to know each child individually, in the first 1000 days each child has different developmental needs and is at their own stage of abilities. The role of the practitioner is to assess the individual needs of the child to organise activities based on ability and how to improve on these.

Vygotsky created the hypothesis of The range of skills a person can execute under the supervision of an expert but is still unable to perform alone is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), because of this practitioners have the responsibility to thoroughly assess the skills and abilities of everyone to create activities suitable for the child's abilities and to allow for progression, as a result the child is able to develop their skills to complete the task or activity unaided.

Exceptional care



Enabling environments

An article by the UK government (2023) highlights the importance of high-quality educational settings, suggesting: A well-planned learning environment plays a crucial part in the development of babies. Settings should be organised to allow for high quality free play and authentic experiences.

Enabling environments

Setting managers have the obligation to create settings that are safe and welcoming for all children. The setting should allow appropriate activities and facilities for babies of all abilities. According to Brock (2013), Play is a fundamental aspect of a child's development. It allows positive development of cognitive, social, physical and emotional well-being and helps to develop skills needed in later life. For example, confidence and the ability to build strong relationships. Practitioners should create a space that offers room for indoor and outdoor play, facilitate for activities that are new to them for them to progress onto new skills and milestones as well as encouraging imaginative play, role play and problem solving.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) imposes legal obligations on organisations to guarantee children the greatest possible start in life through the provision of optimal services and the seamless collaboration of institutions working towards this goal. Pregnancy lays the groundwork for long-term health and wellbeing, as Marmot (2010) points out. The years leading up to and following childbirth are critical to the chances of a mother, her kid, and her family, as they affect everything from obesity to heart disease, educational attainment, and economic standing. As a result, policy direction has recognized the significance of the first 1000 days of life, which begin during pregnancy and continue until the kid turns two, placing a focus on collaborating with outside stakeholders and spanning all government policy portfolios.

Settings should be bright and interactive with opportunities for real life activities, this will ensure life- long abilities for children. Enabling environments allow for exploration and imaginative play. Even younger babies will use their instincts to try new activities such as reaching for eye-catching toys and items.

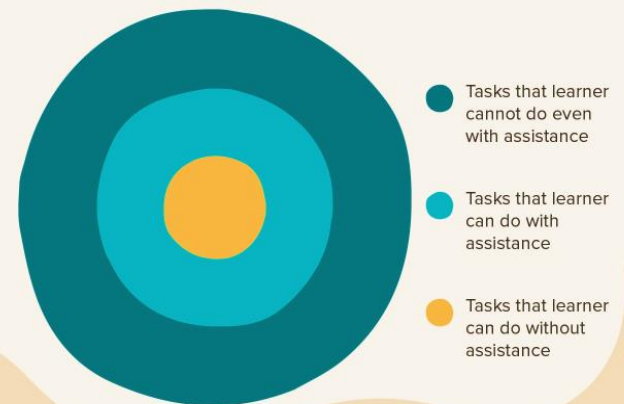


Virtual lab school (no date)



Babies are born with the innate desire and motivation to learn; from their very early days of life, they learn from the environment around them and the responses from those around them. This allows for positive brain connections. Being active allows for creativity and exploration to continue to develop. (Learning and teaching Scotland, 2005). Vygotsky created the hypothesis of The range of skills a person can execute under the supervision of an expert but is still unable to perform alone is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), because of this practitioners have the responsibility to thoroughly assess the skills and abilities of everyone to create activities suitable for the child's abilities and to allow for progression, as a result the child is able to develop their skills to complete the task or activity unaided.

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT



Healthline(2020)

Activities

Fine motor skills by the age of 2:

- Drink independently from a cup/beaker.
- Turn the pages of a book.
- Build towers from few blocks.
- Eat with cutlery without assistance.

Gross motor skills by the age of 2:

- Running.
- Walk up and down steps with assistance.
- Climbing.
- By the age of 2 most children can talk in sentences.

Activities that promote development

Scavenger hunts=

Toddlers love to explore and are inherently curious. One can plan out scavenger hunts in advance or produce them on the fly. Look for goods in a certain color like purple at the grocery store or for items in a particular shape like circles around the house or nursery setting. (lehrman, 2023)

Sensory activities such as sensory books and sensory rooms are a great activities which are fun for the child which also help them develop. It helps with fine motor skills of younger babies and engages their senses.



Professional partnerships

The government, in partnership with local areas, intends to ensure parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years.

Read the link below to access the UK governments report on the 'first 1000 days'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-first-1000-days-of-life-report/government-response-to-the-health-and-social-care-select-committee-report-on-first-1000-days-of-life>

Professional partnerships

Launched in 2009, the government's **universal Healthy Child Programme (HCP)** aims to reduce inequities and improve results by combining targeted support with universal coverage. The provision of the universal offer of preventive and early intervention services for infants and families—which guarantees children, parents, and families have continuity of care throughout this crucial time—relies heavily on the HCP. Early identification of children and families in need of specific help is important, particularly during pregnancy. Drawing on the lessons learned from the Family Nurse Partnership and Wales' Flying Start program; it is suggested that the Government create a program that children and families in need of more specialized care can access.

During the first 1,000 days, families require access to a comprehensive network of services, including basic healthcare, health visiting, midwifery, mental health, housing, childcare, education, social services, and occasionally probation services. Strategic and operational cooperation amongst these many entities was deemed "a major challenge" by the National Children's Bureau.

The department for education (2013) wrote stated how In 1998 the government created the **'Sure start programme'**. They set up hubs that allow families and children to allow access to childcare, parenting support, health visitation services and even financial and housing support. The aim of the programme is to enhance the lives of young children and their families, lowering disparities in their development, preparing them for school, enhancing their parenting abilities, and enhancing their health and opportunities in life.

Challenges

Delivering outstanding practice in an early year's settings is affected by several factors. **Financial constraints** highlights a significant hurdle faced by childcare providers. Early years careers (2024) states that providers are faced with the responsibilities of accommodating more children whilst also delivering the highest quality of care and education they can. Many childcare centers run on limited budgets, which makes it challenging to offer the greatest facilities and educational resources. Because of this, care becomes more expensive, which is difficult for families to pay.

Implementing policies and procedures is a vital part of the childcare providers role. To ensure safe and effective care policies must be strictly followed. Regulations can often be too complex to understand. To allow for thorough safeguarding and ensure well-being for every child, adequate training for every staff member must be given and allow support to ensure full understanding of guidelines to create a safe environment for children. Policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated to ensure effectiveness. (Lee, 2023)

The Early Intervention Foundation(no date) has brought attention to the barriers that the most vulnerable families face while trying to access government programs. These challenges may have to do with transportation or other expenses, perceived stigma, or the proximity or availability of services. The EIF outlines assessments of the data from programs with a home visiting component that have been demonstrated to enhance outcomes for kids and young adults in its Handbook.

Challenges

Reference list

Admin (2023) *Increasing demand for childcare services: Navigating the challenges and opportunities in the UK, Early Years Careers*. Available at: <https://www.earlyyearscreers.com/eyc/latest-news/sector-news/increasing-demand-for-childcare-services-navigating-the-challenges-and-opportunities-in-the-uk/> (Accessed: 16 January 2024).

Australian government (no date). *Pregnancy: birth and baby*. Available at: [The first 1,000 days | Pregnancy Birth and Baby \(pregnancybirthbaby.org.au\)](https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au) (Accessed: 4th December 2023)

Barker D J P(1998) '*In Utero programming of chronic disease*'. Clinical Science 95: 115–128.

Brock, A, Dodds, S, Jarvis, P, Olunga, Y. (2013) '*perspectives on play*'. Oxon: Routledge.

Bowlby, John (1997) Attachment and loss. Volume 1: attachment. London: Pimlico

Dyson A, Hertzman C, Roberts H, Tunstill J and Vaghri Z (2009) '*Childhood development, education and health inequalities. Report of task group*'. Submission to the Marmot Review Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ghcg/marmotreview/consultation/Early_years_and_education_report.

Early intervention foundation guidebook - institute for government. (no date) .Available at: <https://instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/early-intervention-foundation-guidebook.pdf> (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Education, D. for (2013) *Sure start children's centres: Guidance for Local Authorities*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-childrens-centres> (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Healthline(2020) '*What is the zone of proximal development?*'. Available at: [Zone of Proximal Development Relation to Children's Education \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/zone-of-proximal-development)

Knickmeyer, C. *et al* (2008) *A structural MRI study of the human brain development from birth to 2 years*. The journal of Neuroscience, 28 (47).

Learning and Teaching Scotland (no date) *Let's talk about pedagogy - education Scotland*. Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/media/13khv2ys/talkpedagogypdf> (Accessed: 11 January 2024).

Lee, M. (2023) '10 Common Childcare Management Challenges (and How to Solve Them)', *Playground*, January. Available at: [https://www.tryplayground.com/blog/10-common-childcare-management-challenges-\(and-how-to-solve-them\)](https://www.tryplayground.com/blog/10-common-childcare-management-challenges-(and-how-to-solve-them)) (Accessed: 18 January 2024).

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007) *In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Centre on the Developing Child: Harvard. Available: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/InBrief-The-Science-of-Early-Child>

Shetty, P. (2023) *What are the common challenges in Baby Care?*, *Medium*. Available at: <https://medium.com/@shushubabiesseo/what-are-the-common-challenges-in-baby-care-5202b09745a9> (Accessed: 16 January 2024).

Stanfordchildren.org (2012) *Anatomy of a Child's Brain*. Available at: [Anatomy of a Child's Brain \(stanfordchildrens.org\)](https://stanfordchildrens.org)

The Best Start for Life A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report (no date). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605c572b8fa8f545d23f8a73/Early_Years_Report.pdf.

Uk government (2023) *Development matters*. Available at: Development Matters - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). (Accessed: January 2024)

Virtual lab school (no date) Availabe at: [Learning Environments: An Introduction | Virtual Lab School](#)

Viam clinic (2022) *The Importance of Nutrition in the First 1000 Days of a Child's Life*. Available at: <https://viamclinic.vn/bai-viet/tam-quan-trong-cua-dinh-duong-trong-1000-ngay-dau-doi-cua-tre/>. (Accessed: 4th December)