



Exceptional Care

Introduction



What are the first 1000 days?

The first 1000 days is the day of conception to 1000 days (2 years of age). The first 1000 days of a baby's life are extremely important and can affect the child's future. If a child experiences adverse childhood experiences (ACES) such as (but not limited to) abuse, poverty and violence can have a huge impact on the development and well-being of an individual. Pregnancy birth & baby (2022).

Why is it important?

The first 1000 days can have an extreme effect on a baby's future and therefore it is extremely important that they have the support system and exceptional care to ensure that the baby has the most positive start to life. The first 1000 days are extremely important to the development of a baby's immune system, metabolism, brain, and physical development. Parents (2018).

What is exceptional care?

Exceptional care limited (2020) suggests that exceptional care is when a child has outstanding care where they feel safe, supported, and secure. It is important that children also feel respected and

heard as this will support them to have the skill to overcome conflict and create positive and healthy relationships. It can also help them with self-care, and it can overall improve their quality of life. Whizpa.com(2022).

Why is it important to promote exceptional care?

It is important to promote exceptional care as it supports the development of the child such as social, emotional, and communication skills. It is important that children can develop these skills as it can support their confidence, help them understand and regulate their emotions, and overall their holistic development. Division of early childhood (2022).

Current challenges



Current challenges that childcare providers may face are:

- Not enough time- Practitioners may not have enough time to give each child the same amount of attention, or may only be able to give each child a small amount of attention. ways to overcome this could be group activities so that every child feels included.
- Staff-to-child ratio- The staff-to-child ratio for babies under the age of 2 is 1 staff to 3 babies. This can make it difficult to give each child attention when they require it for example if all 3 babies are upset or need attention at the same time it can be very difficult for a staff member to meet the requirements of each child. A lower staff-to-child ratio can improve the quality of care as the practitioner has fewer children to look after. Extension foundation (2019).
- Disability/funding- If a child or staff member has a disability they may need things installed into the nursery for example if a child was in a wheelchair, ramps may need to be installed

to ensure that they have access to everything that every other child has. This may be challenging as it may take a nursery a while to get the funding and support to install the needed things.

- The curriculum- The curriculum has been put in place to help children develop to their full potential, but it requires practitioners to fill out an extreme amount of paperwork and this can lead to practitioners being overworked, unpaid hours, and high levels of stress, earlyyears Careers (2016). This can affect the care of a child as these practitioners are responsible for caring for the children and if they are constantly stressed and putting lots of focus on paperwork this can decrease the level of care provided to the children.

Activity ideas



1 - Activity ideas:

Lose parts

Messy play

Mark making

Outdoor play

Activity ideas

What is play?

Play is how a child experiences the world and understands it. Children naturally play if they are given the freedom and opportunity to. Through exploring, trying, observing, and having fun children develop fine motor and gross motor skills, problem-solving skills, and how the world around them works. Play Scotland (2023).

Messy play-

- Messy play encourages the exploration of different textures, colors and experiences. Messy play can support fine motor skills such as hand movement, and hand-to-eye coordination. It can also support the development of communication, numeracy and creative thinking. Early childhood development assoc (2017) quotes that '**Messy play promotes:** Physical development, Language development, Creative development, Emotional development, Social development, and mathematical development.'

Outdoor play-

- Outdoor play is a multi-sensory environment as it is constantly changing, through temperature, sounds, sights, and more. It encourages children to learn about the world around them through a hands-on experience which makes learning fun and easy. Outdoor play can help support socializing skills, numeracy skills, communication skills, and fine and gross motor skills. As children learn better through hands-on experiences playing outdoors is a great way to learn about bugs, animals, and plants. 1st 1,000 days new parent support (2017).

Loose parts play-

- Loose parts can be simple everyday /household items. It is a great way for children to learn as loose-part objects are open-ended therefore supporting the development of problem-solving skills and creativity. Children can use their imagination and creativity to put objects together. Play Scotland (2023).

Mark making play

- Mark-making activities can help support creativity, writing, fine motor skills, and independence skills. EYR (2017) suggests that mark-making activities can help support fine motor skills, imagination, and creativity and can help support the development of writing.
- Reggio Emilia approach- Reggio Emilia believed that children should lead their own learning and play a role in constructing their knowledge, allowing a child to do this can support their expression, communication, and understanding of their emotions, working in a team, and problem-solving skills. Daynurseries.co.uk (2021).

Importance of the environment



The importance of the environment

The environment must be an enabling environment as children learn through their environment. The environment a child is raised in is extremely important as the environment can affect a child's

development, health, mood, learning, communication, relationships, and how they regulate their emotions. Tell gurus (2023).

Piaget's theory- Piaget believed that the environment of a child should grow and adapt to a child as they grow and develop. This was based on Piaget's 4 stages of cognitive development: Sensorimotor Stage (0-2 years), Preoperational Stage (2-7 years), Concrete Operational Stage (7-11 years), Formal Operational Stage (12+ years). Twinkle (no date).

Being inclusive



2 - What is being inclusive?

Having inclusive practice is when everyone has the same opportunities and no one feels left out.

Why is being inclusive important?

It is important that every child feels included and is given the same opportunities as this will support their confidence, self-respect respect for others, understanding, and empathy skills. Extention foundation (2019).

It is important that childcare practitioners treat each other with respect and inclusivity as they must work as a team to ensure that every child is receiving exceptional care and that every child is getting

the support to reach their full potential. It is also important that every practitioner is treated equally by their managers.

There are some challenges that practitioners face when being inclusive for example if a child has a disability that results in them being in a wheelchair they may not be able to participate in activities unless there are things put into place. Another challenge that practitioners may face is that some children may have additional needs that interfere with activities for example if a child has autism this can cause sensory issues such as not liking wet textures (this is not for every child with autism) therefore practitioners will have to plan activities ahead to ensure that every child can feel included.

Professional partnership/relationships



Professional relationships are very important in childcare as practitioners need to be able to work together, share information correctly and work efficiently as a team. It is important that practitioners and parents/carers have a professional relationship to ensure that practitioners and

parents/carers are getting information on the child's development in and outside of the setting. The child is getting the support they need and to ensure that parents are getting correct information at the end of the day regarding how their child has been. Earlyyearsatters (2023).

Respectful care and learning



As practitioners it is important that we give children meaningful learning experiences as children learn through engaging environments such as observation, listening to their surroundings, exploring, questioning things, experiencing different textures, and building, Raisingchildren.net.au (2022). Ways practitioners can do this is through allowing babies to be independent when feeding, sticking to the same routine so that babies can learn their routine, and language development during nappy changes this can be done through singing, talking, or making 'silly' noises.

It is important that practitioners give each child in their care these experiences, but due to staff-to-child ratios, this can be difficult as a practitioner looking after babies must look after 3 babies therefore if they leave the room to change one child they may feel rushed to get back to the room and therefor not giving the baby a meaningful nappy change. When a practitioner is feeding babies it is important that they give them meaningful learning experiences and give the baby attention, allow them to be independent, and give them encouragement and praise but this can be difficult as they must care for 3 babies and perhaps two are eating and one is in a bouncer going to sleep, and this could result in the practitioner feeling rushed and stressed and therefor could affect the children's exceptional care and in the long run affecting their development.

Lower staff-to-child ratios are proven to give children better meaningful learning experiences and support their development as they will have more opportunities and practitioners will be able to support the child more as there is fewer children to spread their attention to. Plos one (2017).

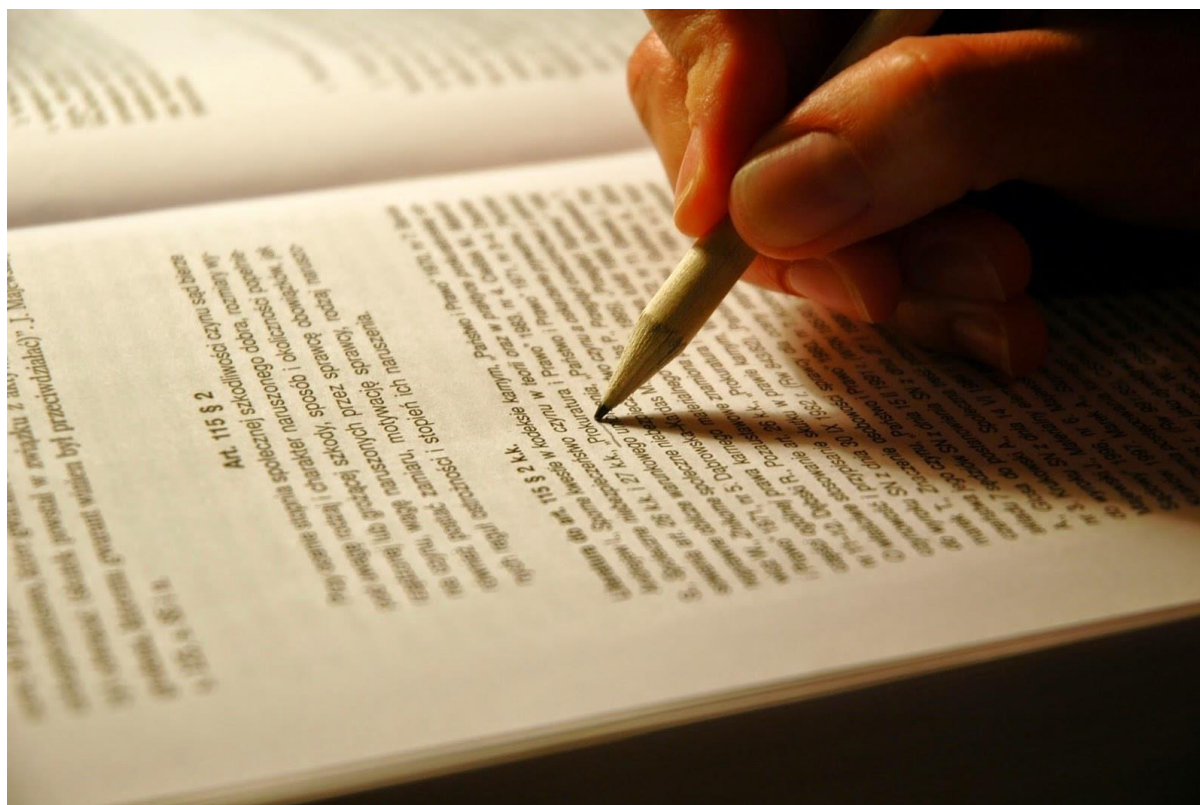
International approaches



3 - Forest schools

Forest schools are where children learn primarily through the outdoor environment and learn about the world around them in a hands-on experience. Learning outside can support emotional, social, spiritual, physical, and intellectual skills as well as makes a safe environment where children can be themselves without judgment and take healthy risks. By taking risks children learn to be independent, resilient, and confident and learn problem-solving skills. Forest schools encourage children to be healthy, resilient, and creative, and to learn independently. Forestschoolassociation (no date).

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