

Development across the lifespan (ECES4009/C)

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‘Proper Nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child’s life is linked to improved physical and cognitive development and ability to learn in the future’. (Herbalife Nutrition Foundation, 2024)



Tasker, H (2017)

Nutrition plays a very important role when it comes to Physical development and growth. Our food is our fuel, and this especially goes for children too. Proper nutrition can have a huge impact on child’s growth, if a child is to consume a daily intake of fruit and vegetables in a healthy diet then this can strengthen their bones and adding protein can help with building strong muscles which assists with their bodies becoming stronger and for them to grow taller. As part of a nutritious diet children need a lot of water to keep their body hydrated which can also help with bone strength, hair growth and brain development (Sylvain, 2022). ‘To stay healthy and maintain a healthy weight, children need to be physically active and eat the right amount of nutrients to balance the energy they use’. As explained by (Healthdirect Australia Limited, 2022) as well as children keeping up with a healthy balanced diet they also need to be physically engaged in keeping active too, as their bodies are intaking all the correct nutrients needed then this can impact them when undertaking physical activities by the nutrients filling the body with energy for the child to be able to burn off when being active allowing a balance between the energy they are using and what nutrients are going in keeping a healthy weight for that child.

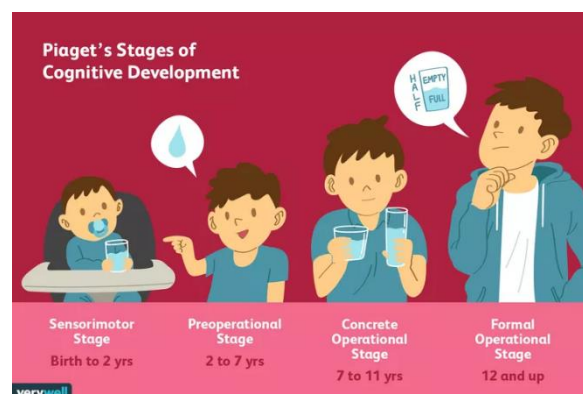


GOV.UK (2017)

Childcare practitioners play a critical role when supporting nutrition and physical activity in children under their care. 'Children aged 0 to 4 spent a median of 24.0 hours a week in formal childcare' found by (Gov.uk, 2023) showing that children spend most of their time within childcare settings which means that most of their important meals and snacks will be within them hours and these settings and practitioners then have responsibility to support and encourage a healthy diet is maintained as well as keeping them physically active which will have a huge impact on their growth and development. The role of early care and education settings can provide support towards a child's growth and development by providing nutritious foods , promote physical activity day to day , promote outdoor learning , limit the amount of screentime a child has, support breastfeeding and to participate in many programs and courses in which detail nutrition and physical development (CDC, 2021). Practitioners roles are to implement healthy eating habits into their teaching by including nutrition activities in lessons and learning experiences making it fun and enjoyable to give the children a positive attitude towards healthy eating and for them to understand early the importance, To also provide support to families and parents by presenting them with information on healthy eating practises and their child's nutritional needs so that they can encourage this at home and develop more of an understanding on healthy eating habits , To provide all childcare staff with the correct training on nutrition and foodservice training and to model healthy eating behaviours and an active lifestyle to show children your passion and enjoyment by taking part in physical activities and tying different foods and maintaining a healthy diet. As well as ensuring children are maintaining a healthy diet practitioner's also have a role to promote and encourage physical activity to ensure children have that balance and burn off the right energy to keep a healthy weight and help growth and development. By doing so they can promote activities for large motor muscle such as running, kicking, jumping, throwing a ball and provide outdoor or indoor physical activities depending on the weather. They can also introduce more active learning through the day by keeping children active such as promoting learning through play, active games and to supply equipment and toys that motivate physical activity such as balls, hula hoops, cardboard boxes and bubbles. (New York State , 2017).

Many Factors and barriers can have a huge impact on good nutrition such as the environment in which they are brought up in and the influence of their parents eating behaviours and lifestyle. Children from a very early stage tend to copy what they see for example, if their parents show enjoyment in a lot of junk food but show dissatisfaction when it comes to eating vegetables and tend not to put these into their daily intake in meals at home then it is more likely for that child to follow their parents eating habits and only enjoy junk food in which they are used too as they also copy this from the body image of their parents. Media is another factor that can highly impact a child's nutritional needs as depending on what they see or watch they are exposed to for example, they may see a television advertisement of their favourite movie character advertising unhealthy products and will feel influenced to want that product to be like that character. A lot of Parents/Carers focus a lot when a child is less interested in a lot of foods and can put pressure for them to eat more and bring on a negative experience for that child causing them not to enjoy meal times whilst they are less focused on children who eat larger intakes on food and pay less attention to their daily intake (Scaglioni, et al., 2018)

Seong, J (2023)

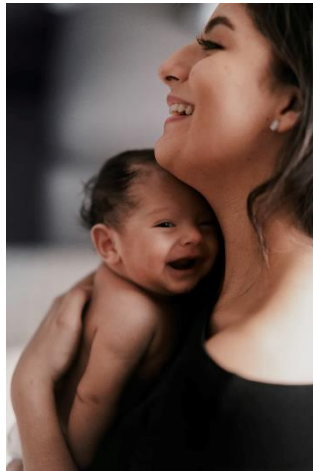


Jean Piaget (1896-1980) a scientist originally studying mollusks first peaked his interest in philosophy and psychology and focused on finding answers on the development of knowledge in which he began by observing his three children based on their mental development. Piaget's theory is made up of four stages, the sensory motor stage (Age 0-2), The Pre-operational stage (Age 2-7), The concrete operational stage (Age 7-11) and the formal operational stage (Age 12+). He believed that to build a nutritional food plan and knowledge to the child on healthy food, parents or practitioners can support this by asking questions, showing photographs of new or already seen foods, discussion activities around healthy food such as reading and asking questions about what was discussed in the stories to help guide them in remembering food schemata and share their own thoughts and feelings. By doing so, children gain understanding of food schema and the different types of foods out there, they introduced to new food and their own food plans are enhanced. An example of his theory practise when teaching children, the importance of food groups would be using the food pyramid and making it into a puzzle by cutting them up and allow the child to put the pieces back together which will expand their knowledge on food and organise food information themselves. Piaget's Theory allows us to understand the way in which a child's cognitive development progresses. Understanding and using the stages of the theory schema, adaptation and equilibration which supports the planning in education around nutrition and foods and motivates children to become physically active, creativity and self-learning (Başkale, et al., 2009).

Overall, Nutrition Plays a vital role in a child's growth and development by strengthening their muscles and bones allowing them to grow taller. As well as keeping to a healthy balanced diet children need to keep active to support the development alongside good nutrition. The practitioner's role to encourage this is to provide nutritional daily meals, promote physical activity day to day and educate children on their food knowledge. The environment in which a child is brought up in can impact a child's nutrition and development as they influenced by their parent's eating behaviours and lifestyle and what they see or hear in the media can also change what they eat/do. Piaget's Theory around nutrition provides understanding of the different stages of cognitive development in a child's life and how it works and allows parents and practitioners to use these stages to support the planning in education around nutrition and motivate children to become physically active, creative and their self-learning.

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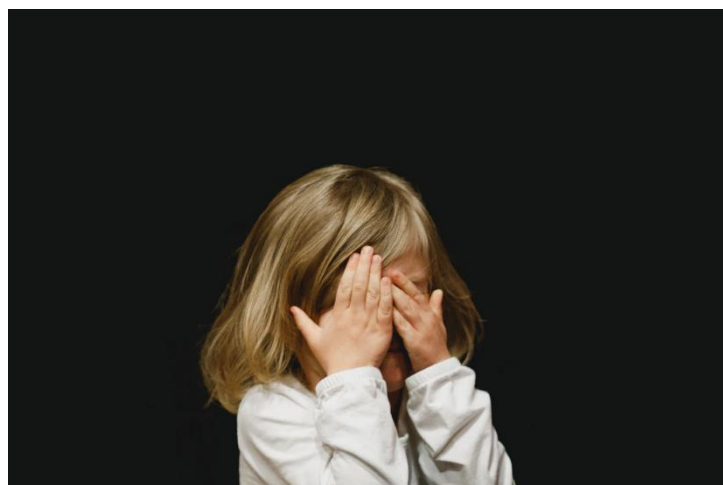
‘Children with secure attachments are more likely to develop emotional intelligence, good social skills and robust mental health’ (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2021).



Angel, R (2019)

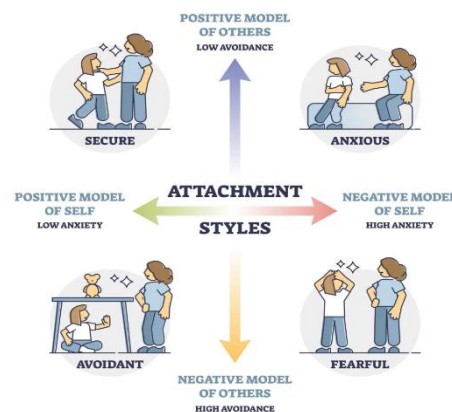
Attachment works alongside emotional development as it acts on the feeling of closeness between a child and their parent forming stronger bonds and tying families together. This is beneficial as it supports the independence of the child and the adult gains experience through parenthood. Having that attachment enhances a sense of security for the child therefore allows them to explore, learn, increases motivation and maintains a healthy well-being. Attachment is vital for children to feel safe, reduce stress levels and to feel a sense of comfort. This also prepares children to adapt to certain situations and to overcome difficult obstacles they may be confronted with in the future (Rees, 2007).

Practitioners play a key role in creating an environment in which children feel comfortable and understood which can improve their personal, social and emotional development. Building rapport between the child and their parents with the practitioner is most beneficial to support the child's personal and specific needs. This will enable the child to feel comfortable approaching the practitioner with any worries or needs they may have. Once a secure relationship is formed and the child feels reassured in that relationship it helps the practitioner's role when tending to that child's emotional needs and well-being. As part of their role in helping children to be aware of and express their feelings, the practitioner can help by implementing strategies to calm down. An example of this would be working with a child who displays challenging behaviour and being able to understand the child's personal needs to form a plan such as introducing a 'safe space/room' for the child to have access to when they start to feel frustrated or mood cards for the child to express how they are feeling for them to be able to self-regulate. (Inness, 2015)



Woods, C (2016)

There are many factors and barriers that can affect a child forming a relationship with an adult which can have an impact on their emotional development. Some of these factors include difficulties at home such as abuse or trauma experiences to the child or parent, parental addictions or misuse within the home, a switch of carers or home environments or parental mental health issue. Some other factors are financial frustration from low income or being a single parent, losing a caregiver that the child had an attachment with a child who was receiving neonatal care and was separated from their parents at birth. These factors can influence attachment issues and may result in behaviour change in children as they can become depressed or anxious, worrying when their attachment carer leaves or not showing any concern when their care giver leaves or returns, showing fear towards caregiver, not showing any interests in their surroundings or toys. These can further develop as they grow older and affect concentration, struggle to form secure relationships, difficulty seeking help, difficulty calming themselves down, withdrawn and uninterested in activities and displaying anger or upset rapidly and often without any triggers (NSPCC, 2021).



McLeod, S (2023).

Psychologist and Psychiatrist John Bowlby grasped an interest in separation and anxiety which introduced the making of the Attachment theory alongside two others James Roberston and Mary Ainsworth. Bowlby's theory focused on the emotional connection between a child and its mother. Bowlby believed that everyone is born with existing behaviours that make the closeness and attachment between the child and parent strong, so the chances of harm to that child decreases and supports their personal and emotional development guiding them for all other later interactions throughout their lives. The theory is made up of four stages on how attachment is developed by the infant as well as the mother which includes the pre attachment phase from birth to six weeks such as smiling or crying. The second stage is attachment in-the making stage where the child starts to express emotions toward the caregiver for example laughs, smiles when in company with the caregiver and becomes quickly less frustrated and quietens when picked up by the mother. Clear-cut attachment phase is when the child begins to show separation anxiety proving the attachment bond to be apparent, for example the child becoming extremely upset when the mother leaves the room. The Final stage is the reciprocal relationship phase in which language development progresses ad the child is now more able to understand the reasons to why the mother is going to be absent and allows them to control their emotions and decrease separation anxiety (MARACHELVI, n.d.). For a child to develop normally they would form an attachment relationship with the main caregiver by the way in which they respond to that child for example if they maintain quality care towards their physical and emotional needs frequently attachment will form (Benoit, 2004).

To conclude, attachment is forming stronger bonds between a parent and child whilst also supporting the independence and sense of security for the child. Practitioners' roles in supporting attachment and emotional well-being includes developing secure relationships with the child to enhance their personal, social and emotional needs by implementing strategies to calm down. Some Factors that can impact a child's emotional development include difficulties at home such as abuse or trauma experiences to the child or parent, parental addictions or misuse within the home,

financial frustration from low income or being a single parent and losing a caregiver that the child had an attachment with. Bowlby's theory on attachment focused on the emotional connection and bond between the infant and the mother. The theory is made up of four stages which include pre attachment stage, attachment in the making, clear cut attachment phase and reciprocal relationship phase. These Four stages help to support personal and emotional development and decreases any harm to that child allowing them to help with other interactions later in life.

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'Girls are more than twice as likely to experience emotional difficulties as boys' (UCL, 2018)

Mossholder, T (2018)



Emotional expression contributes massively to healthy child development in which gender can play a role in effecting a child's emotions as there are many differences between boys and girl's emotions and expressions. Children learn to express their emotion through communication such as displaying fulfilment or frustration allowing the parents to understand how the child is feeling. Being able to express these emotions allows the child to learn which emotions to convey and when to express them, how to communicate their needs to others and being able to respond to others effectively, which all support the development of healthy relationships. Gender differences are mainly down to cultural beliefs or expectations which can hugely influence and limit how a child presents their emotions. For example, there are expectations and beliefs that boys are to be strong and calm and only show anger, if necessary, where's as girls are softer and more emotional and more likely to express sadness. (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013)

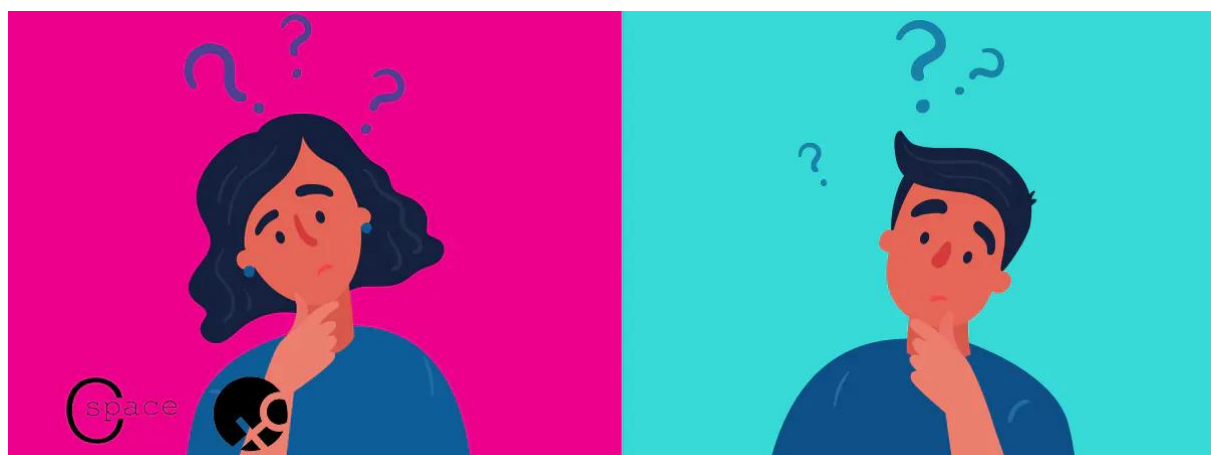
The practitioners' role is to ensure every child feels welcomed, valued and included no matter their gender. The environment around them and their parents play a role in how a child feels about themselves and are shaped on their attitudes or dispositions which can limit their potential and own ideas of who they want to be. Practitioners can support gender differences by challenging the effects of prejudice and discrimination and allow these conversations to take place, also to ensure that all resources such as books avoid stereotypical depictions of people when it comes to gender

differences. Another way of supporting this would be implementing gender flexible activities and resources for example role-play clothing allowing children to play in freely as it reflects diverse diversity. Grouping children in mixed gender groups for seating arrangements or partnered work can allow boys and girls to engage with each other (Education, 2021). Practitioners need to think about the language they are using and avoid sexism. Shared jobs around the classroom should be shared equally between boys and girls as both can carry out these jobs. Practitioners should not assign certain colours to boys or girls as children should be free to choose whatever colour they would like. (EAC HWB , n.d.)



Musings, R (2016)

Childrens' view on gender is shaped by their parents and the environment in which they latch onto to make something of themselves and the world. These can both massively effect the child and their emotional development on how they feel about themselves. A barrier effecting emotional development would be parent's stereotypes and their views on how children need to be, for example, a father may play quite rough with their son during play but will be gentler and softer towards his daughter. This can play on their emotions as the son may feel he has to be strong and tough and restrict showing any weakness, whilst the girl may feel she has to be soft and gentle by expressing emotions such as being caring or sadness. Retailers can also influence this as they can market what children feel they need to wear to match their gender, for example, colours like pink for girls and blue for boys or princesses for girls and monsters for boys. Another influencing factor is the set-up of a classroom by seating plans dividing girls and boys, rewarding behaviours on how a boy acts according to a girl and classroom resources and displays (Pemberton, 2022).



Pemberton, E (2022)

Leslie Brody is professor who teaches psychotherapy, Child therapy, family therapy and special topics on the family. Brody's theory is based around her interests around gender and cultural differences relating to emotion as well as assessing treatment approaches for children with mood disorders or anxiety (University, n.d.). Brody's argument is that girls and boys act differently with their emotions due to the influence of social context and ideas surrounding them, for example girls are expected to internalise their negative emotions such as sadness, anger and fear while outwardly displaying more positive emotions such as happiness, excitement and serenity. Whereas for boys it is more socially acceptable to express emotions such as anger, disgust, fear much more than girls can and in that expression aids them in overcoming certain barriers and hardship. This distinction goes more unnoticed because traditionally gender roles tell us that men have a duty to protect and provide for their families thus prompting boys to adopt a more independent role. Brody states biologically boys show higher arousal levels, hyperactivity and more frequent displays of negative emotions. Brody's ideas looked at how cultural stereotypes have influenced generations perspectives of gender roles such as 'emotional girls' and 'tough boys' and how these beliefs later in life effected individuals. She brings to notice the issues on the importance of gender roles in the organization of family life and looked at how these are implemented and change the idea of how society sees the traits of male and female in a child (Peters, 2017).

To sum up, emotional expression is key in a healthy child development in which gender plays a massive role. The way in which a child learns to communicate their emotions to parent's, practitioners and other adult's shapes how the child regulates and expresses their emotions. This is usually a reflection of the beliefs and societal roles projected by those around them when developing those expressions of emotion. For example, there are expectations and beliefs that boys are to be strong, calm and only show anger, if necessary, where's as girls are softer and more emotional. Leslie Brody, a professor, argued in her theory that girls and boys act differently due to the influence of social context and the ideas surrounding them. She focused on the importance of gender roles in the organization of family life and looked at how these implemented and change the idea of how society sees the traits of male and female in a child.

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