

THE FIRST 1000 DAYS



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Introduction

The first 1000 days of a child's life has such a significant impact. LinkedIn (2023) suggest that on how they develop and overall well-being. The foundations for development on all levels physical, cognitive, and emotional is established during this time.

There is a considerable measure of potential and vulnerability within the first 1,000 days. According to Thousand days, (2018) a child's ability to develop, gain knowledge, and thrive is significantly impacted by how well or poorly mothers and children are fed and cared for during this time. This is because a child's brain starts to grow and develop during the first 1,000 days of life, preparing the ground for long-term health.

According to HM Government (2021) additionally, these 1,001 days are crucial for the development of motor and communication skills. A baby can typically walk unaided, have said 50 words or more, kick a ball, climb furniture, and scribble on their own by the time they turn two. Even though, parents and other caregivers must support and encourage their infants in learning these skills, and their development must be monitored. Later, there may be significant issues if developmental delays are not identified and treated quickly.

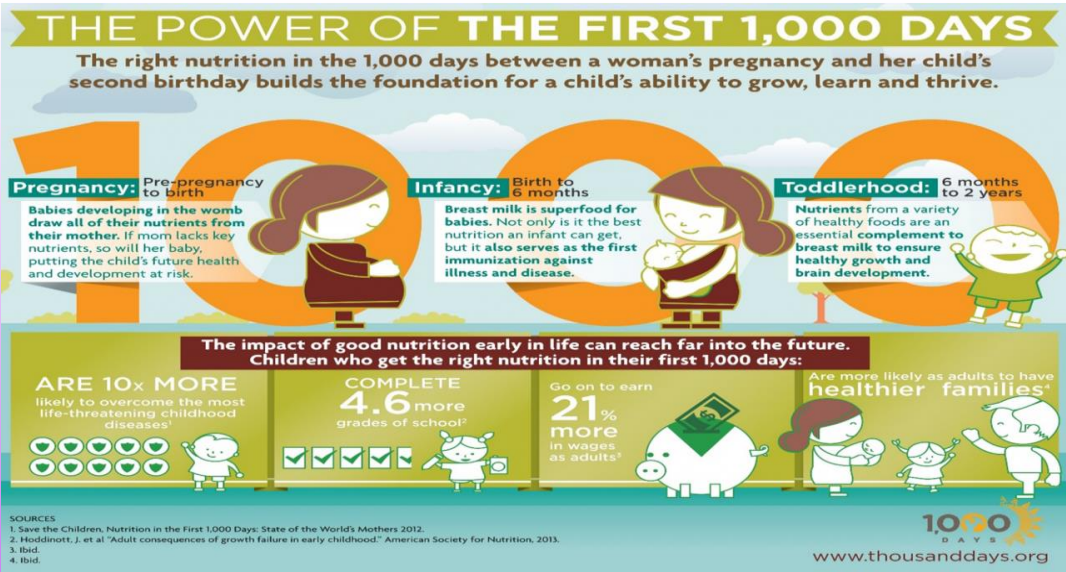
During the first 1,000 days of life Pregnancybirth&baby (2024) suggests that the baby's brain develops more quickly than at any other moment in time. Their personality is influenced by how their brain changes in responding to their surroundings. A healthy diet during pregnancy and the early years of life will promote the healthy development of the unborn child's cognitive abilities, motor skills, and emotional state. A child's development may be impacted for the rest of their life if they are hungry or are exposed to stress or any abuse during this period. A child's physical health later in life may also be impacted by an unsafe or unhealthy environment during the first 1,000 days of life.

Since the brain develops through a scaffolding process Lawler (2023) claims that the systems build upon and depend upon one another, timing is crucial. Slow or impaired growth can quite often throw off the developmental sequence and have a significant affect on one's life. A child's brain is extremely malleable and vulnerable to both positive and negative changes around their rapid growth. A sensitive period is the First Thousand Days. A child's brain may experience permanent and lifelong consequences if they do not receive the right care and requirements, especially around nutrition.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpyD19Sliaw>
UNICEF Philippines (2015)



(Source, Charlotte Stirling-Reed (2020)

Caregiving

For educators of young children, The Education Hub (2018) suggests that providing care is an essential component of their educational work. It is more than just a list of activities that need to be completed for the children beneficial. Cognitive science has shown that especially during the early stages development of brain and body are strongly linked of life. Accordingly, physical care is important to and helps to promote the learning and development of infants and toddlers. A crucial part of infant and toddler teaching and learning is the development of attentive dialogues, which can be helped foster through the nurturing that occurs during moments of care like mealtimes, nappy changes, and bedtime.

Quality experiences in settings should embrace and reflect the holistic development of children. Brodie (2018) suggest that physical, cognitive, linguistic, and personal, social, and emotional (PSE) development will all be affected by the quality and standard of care received. In addition to being able to meet the needs of dependent babies and young children, practitioners with specialized skills are required to understand the rate and complexity of development of children in the birth to three age range. It is unreasonable and unrealistic to divide care and education. Through play and life experiences, infants and young children are constantly learning. At the same time, they continue to rely on the adults in their lives for everyday needs, affection, and care.

Respectful interactions are essential to providing care in a respectable way. According to Birth to 5 Matters, (No date) when a practitioner decides to adopt a respectful caregiving approach, who they should be recognise the child as a free and equal human being with collaborating. Care events become cooperative dialogues where the child feels competent, acknowledged, and valued as an individual because the adult does everything with the child rather than to them. It is important for practitioners to remember that this is the critical to create to trustworthy relationships with children and to positively support their evolving self-concept.



(Source, Nurturing Care For
Early Childhood Development
(No date)

According to Brodie (2024) Maslow's hierarchy is based on physiological needs. The following are biological essential requirements for human survival: Food, Air Reproduction, Sleep, Clothing, and Water Shelter. Maslow ranked physiological needs first because, until they are satisfied, all other needs take a backseat. Physical survival is our most fundamental need and the main driving force behind our actions. The next level up becomes our motivational focus after this one is completed.



(Source, Brodie (2024))

According to Birth to 5 Matters, (No date) good early childhood education includes and encourages children's care just as much as play and education. Planning for and considering physical care activities like getting dressed, having to wash, feeding, sleeping, changing, and using the bathroom are all part of effective provision. Caregiving that is respectful demands careful planning. Respectful interactions are essential to delivering care in a respectable way.

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By means of organisations like the police, schools, businesses, and healthcare, families and society can meet their needs for safety. According to Brodie (2024) emotional stability, job security, social welfare, law and order, self - assurance, social stability, property, and safety from harm and accidents are some examples. The creation of a safe and predictable environment for children to explore and learn is related to safety needs in the context of early childhood education.

Professional Partnerships

According to Partou (2024) working closely with babies and children, or primary school children, an early year's practitioner attends to their daily needs, such as feeding and changing, while planning developmentally, academically, and emotionally appropriate activities.

Partou (2024) suggest that an early childhood practitioner duties and responsibilities are likely going to include:
Taking care of children's daily physical needs, including Feeding, changing nappies, toilet training, and first aid.
Offering a variety of entertaining and engaging activities, such as messy play and story reading.
Building strong bonds and trust with the children in your care.
Keeping children safe and reporting any issues.
Tracking children's development, documenting it, and updating parents.

According to Care Learning (2024) promoting children's holistic development is one of the main justifications for collaborating. Children's development includes emotional, social, physical, and cognitive growth in addition to intellectual development. Working together with parents, caregivers, and other professionals guarantees that all facets of a child's development are supported.

Care Learning (2024) suggest that with the help of psychologists and family members, you can offer individual needs emotional support for emotional development.
Better physical care routines and early detection of developmental problems can be achieved through physical development collaboration with health professionals.
Cooperation in social development fosters a balanced social environment, guaranteeing that children engage in constructive interactions with both adults and their peers.

Study Prism (2025) suggest that in addition to encouraging a close relationship between the child and parent or caregiver, the early years practitioner's job is to support and guide the child to achieve the best results possible.

Study Prism (2025) shows that supporting parents and caregivers who feel overburdened by the obligation to actively participate in their children's learning and development is crucial for early childhood educators. Practitioners can offer guidance on work to promote that caregiver's interaction and advance educational advantages like motor skill development or mental stimulation. To assist parents and caregivers in this process, they should also offer resources like books or websites that offer information on early childhood education or parenting strategies.



(Source, Mariam (2024)



https://youtu.be/GGtwk-L_VpI
Twinkl (2021)



(Source, Anonim, O (2019)

Maternal factors and support strategies available

Maternal factors	Support strategies available
Mental Health	Gov.uk (2021) shows us that Health visitors As public health nurses, health visitors employ strength-based strategies and cultivate independent relationships to facilitate productive collaboration with parents and families to support behaviour modification, advance health protection, and ensure the safety of children.
Poverty	According to Gov.uk (2024) in addition to being morally required, addressing child poverty is essential to strengthening the economy and society. Our Opportunity Mission is to break the connection between the backgrounds of young people and their future success, and reducing child poverty will change lives and communities. Economic growth also depends on ensuring that millions of children and young people are not disadvantaged. Our businesses and public services lose out on given the chance talent that children could bring when they are not to succeed. Our initiatives to reduce child poverty will depend heavily on our plans to Make Work Pay, Get Britain Working, lower energy costs, lower housing costs, and increase access to childcare.
Nutrition	According to Rose et al. (2016) it should go without saying that children need a nutritious diet to meet their biological needs and reach their full potential. To construct our body's tissues and structures and to maintain the proper functioning of bodily systems, food must first be broken down into component parts.



<https://youtu.be/jlbJyMIqitA>
(Source NHS (2021))

Challenges

Leatherbarrow (2025) suggest that inadequate Income:
In addition to lowering staff morale, low pay also tends to raise turnover rates, which interrupts the continuity of care.

Demanding Working Conditions:
Burnout and low morale are frequently caused by long hours, emotionally and physically taxing work, and a lack of support.

Limited Professional Development:
Staff members' ability to grow and deliver the best possible care is limited by the availability of opportunities and career and skill development.

Lack of Qualified Staff:
The quality of care provided is compromised and children's wellbeing may be at risk due to a shortage of appropriately qualified staff.

Ineffective Leadership:
Ineffective leadership can worsen already-existing issues, foster a hostile workplace, and lower employee morale and output.

Reduced Staff Wellbeing:
Staff mental health and general well-being are adversely affected by high stress levels, burnout, and insufficient support networks.

According to Gray Group International (2024) improving Strategies for Teacher Training and Retention
To solve the teacher shortage, professional development opportunities and teacher training must be given high priority. The early childhood education sector will draw and keep skilled teachers who are enthusiastic about fostering and instructing young minds by providing competitive pay, mentorship programs, and opportunities for career advancement.



(Source, Educater (2024)

Leatherbarrow (2025) suggest that effects on Children:
Enhanced Risks of Safeguarding: High turnover rates, insufficient information sharing, and incomplete staff inductions raise the risk of safeguarding incidents and adversely impact the safety of children.

Disrupted Learning and Development:
Children's emotional and social development is affected by frequent staff changes, which break the vital bond between them and their key persons. Children might struggle to effectively manage developmental transition process and lose out on individual learning opportunities.

Increased Vulnerability for Vulnerable Children:
Children from underprivileged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are especially vulnerable to the detrimental effects of inconsistent care.

The Impact of these challenges on children show us according to Gray Group International (2024)
Impacts on the Development of Cognitive Skills
Children's cognitive development may be affected by inadequate access to high-quality early childhood education. This is brought to light in discussions about the Head Start program, which show how children may not be ready for school and fall behind their fellow students in critical abilities like language development, problem-solving, and logical thinking if they are not exposed to enriching learning experiences early on.

According to Gray Group International (2024) emotional and Social Consequences
The social and emotional development of children is greatly influenced by early childhood education. It leads to the growth of important social skills in children, like cooperation, empathy, and communication. Children may find it difficult to interact with others and face more social and emotional difficulties if they do not have access to high-quality early childhood education.

Think about a child who is deprived of the chance to participate in a highest early childhood education program. They might lose out on important social experiences like group discussions, cooperative project work, and practicing constructive conflict resolution. They may therefore find it difficult to control their emotions, communicate clearly, and build a strong relationship.



(Source, Carmarthen Family Information Service (2023)



(Source, Basekit (2023)

Activities that provide meaningful learning



(Source, Eppard, J. (2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkSRPR8u9Ac&t=7s>



(Source, Crawford, A. (2022)

Activities to Support a child in the first 1000 days



(Source, Special Needs and Sensory Play Ideas. (2016))

Messy Play

In addition to offering countless opportunities for excitement and fun Gascoyne (2018) suggest that messy play can also be enlightening, fulfilling, intriguing, and profoundly calming. It found that the most often mentioned advantages of messy play were communication and self-expression, as well as sensory stimulation, enjoyment, and calmness and soothing. Messy play interactions can be frustrating for some children and disgusting but oddly intriguing for others. Touching some materials can make gloop play the opposite of enjoyable for a child with sensory processing issues.

Sand, water, paint, playdough, gloop, clay, shredded paper, shaving foam, or mud are likely to come to mind when one hears the term messy play, as the spreading of materials.



(Source, How Wee Learn (2019))

Loose Parts

Children who work with loose parts are introduced to the 'what if' world, according to Daly et al (2014) this encourages the kind of thinking that results in theoretical reasoning and problem solving.

Children's play is made more exciting and adventurous by loose parts, which also help them think more creatively and solve problems.

During play, children can move, manipulate, control, and alter exciting, beautiful found objects and materials with loose parts.

Children can transform them into anything they want: an acorn can become an ingredient in a imagined soup, and a stone can become a character in a story.

These items promote cooperation and teamwork as well as discussions and interactions.

Because loose parts encourage creativity and innovation, they help individuals become more socially competent. In today's adult world, each of these skills is valuable.



(Society, of Interior Designers (2019))

Story Telling

Talking with children according to Church et al (2022) high quality interactions between children and educators, whether they be teachers, care givers, parents, or family members, are essential for improving children's outcomes, according to research on early childhood education and care. We know that through language and attentive feedback, rich conversations can extend and support children's interests, which is essential for their learning and growth.

Rhymes and stories help encourage creativity, emotional intelligence, and language skills. Care Learning (2024) suggest they support in children's vocabulary development, knowledge and understanding of rhyme and rhythm, and improvement of their listening and concentrating skills.

International approaches

Compared to other theories, Vygotsky defined play more closely, limiting it to pretend, make-believe, or imaginary play. Twinkl (2021) suggests that according to his theory, children should be helped primarily through imaginary play since it is essential to their cognitive, social, and emotional development. For this play to be successful, it should set up an imaginary scene in which children can adopt and perform roles while adhering to rules that are dictated by those roles. Children can consider and work through ideas and concepts that they cannot see in front of them through imaginative play. Children's social nature is essential for their internal language development and independent thought processes.



Pikler's method provides valuable information. According to Brodie (2024) her attention on relationships and respect offers a framework for developing caring surroundings.

Uninterrupted Play: Supporting Deep Learning

Children play independently without assistance from adults. The surroundings offer suitable obstacles and chances for investigation.

For instance, a toddler tests and modifies the way various-sized balls roll down a mild slope for forty-five minutes.

Through activities inspired by Reggio Emilia, according to Twinkl (2022) children can actively participate in their education by choosing what they wish to start investigating and learn. These activities, which emphasize community and relationship building, can help a child in the following ways: promoting social skills, enabling community involvement, increasing learning enjoyment, encouraging self-expression and confidence building, problem-solving skills, and exposing children to new situations.

(Source, QS Study (2024))

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