



Day Zoom

The First 1000 Days Scrapbook

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Introduction



1 - Image 3: Course Hero (no date)

The first 1000 days of a child's life, from pregnancy to the age of two, are crucial for cognitive, emotional, and physical development. It is widely recognized as one of the most important stages of life and there is a growing international consensus on its significance. This period is part of various initiatives, such as the World Health Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health, the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative, and in England, both the NHS Long Term Plan and Public Health England's 2016 guidance on providing every child with the best start in life (UK Parliament, 2019). The first 1000 days are most important as babies undergo a period of rapid development that

necessitates a comprehensive approach, given the numerous interconnected factors that affect them. However, the most significant influence on a child's development comes from parents and caregivers. Therefore, the learning environment at home can profoundly impact a child's growth and development (HM Government, 2020).

This scrapbook delves into various aspects of caring for infants in different settings. It offers an analysis of current approaches to infant care by evaluating theories and research from renowned theorists such as Montessori, Bronfenbrenner, Reggio and Bowlby.

In addition, the scrapbook explains the importance of these activities in an infant's development. It features images of stimulating environments that support an infant's holistic growth, both indoors and outdoors, and it explains the benefits of such environments while linking them to relevant theories. This resource will leave you feeling informed and equipped to create the best environment for your child's development.

The scrapbook also explores the significance of respectful care and the role of the enabling adult. It explains the importance of engaging infants in meaningful learning opportunities such as eating, changing, and sleeping and provides insights into how to create an environment that fosters such experiences.

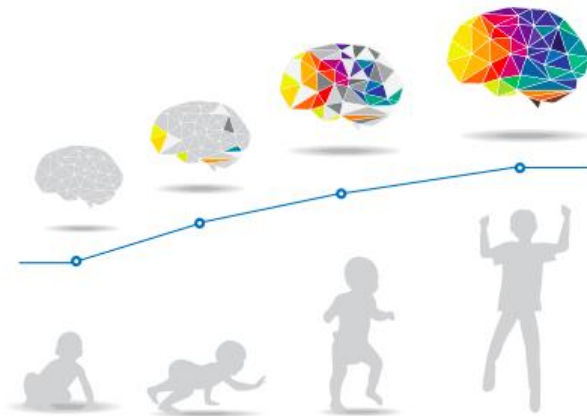
Furthermore, the scrapbook emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and its benefits for both the infant and their family. It highlights the significance of professional relationships and communication in creating an environment that meets the holistic needs of infants.



2 - Image 3: Course Hero (no date)

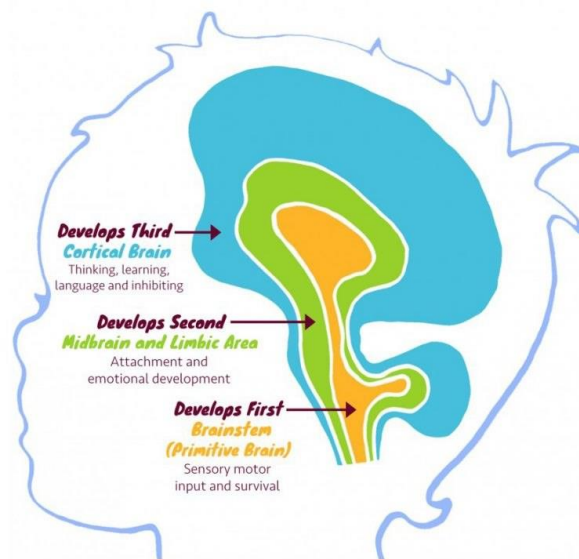
Parents and caregivers are the most significant influence on a child's development (American Psychology Association, 2024).

Brain Development



Save the Children (2016) reports an interesting fact: a child's brain begins developing in the uterus, with an estimated 86 billion neurons at birth. During infancy, these neurons start forming stronger and more numerous bonds, laying the foundations for children's development. These early connections are not just important, they are crucial. They influence a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and they have a long-term impact on their future.



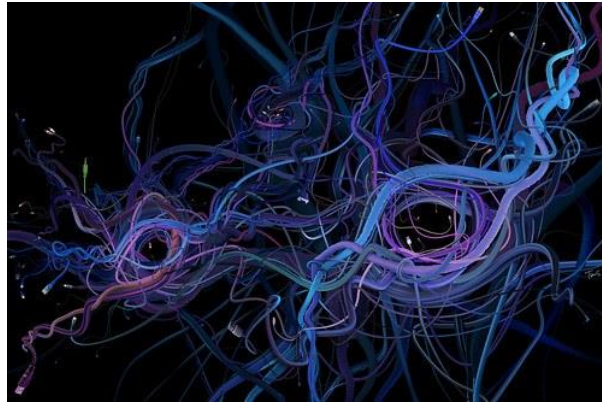


3 - Image 6: NSCC (2020)

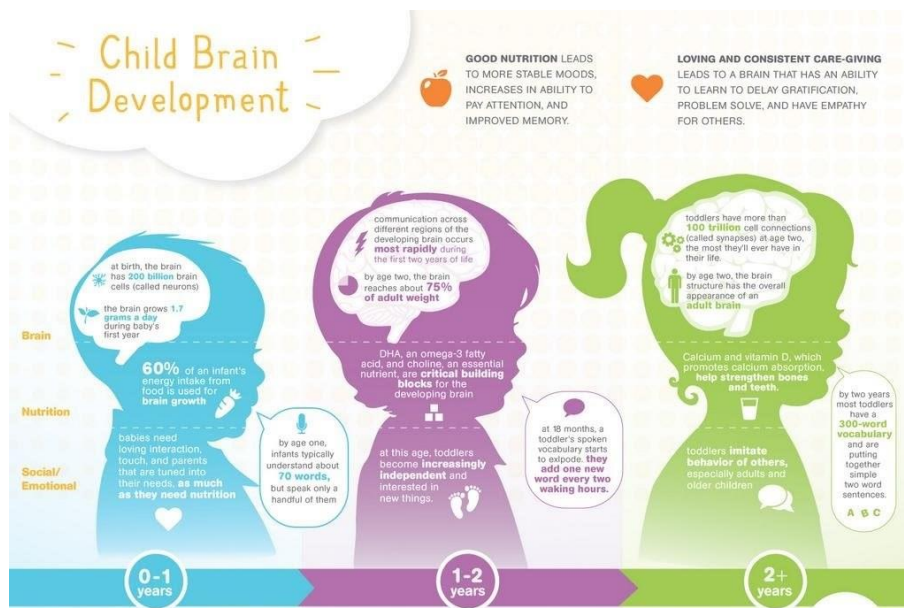
The development of a child's brain begins in the womb and progresses through infancy. Research by Herculano-Houzel in 2009 and Goswami in 2015 cited in Save the Children (2016), shows that the human brain contains approximately 86 billion neurons, which are responsible for processing information. Interestingly, most of these neurons are formed during foetal development. As a child grows and develops, these neurons begin to form connections with each other, which become stronger and more extensive over time. These connections form networks that are crucial for a child's cognitive and social development, as noted by Stiles and Jernigan in 2010 as suggested by Save the Children (2016)

Neural networks consist of more than just neurons - the wires that link neurons together are also crucial components. Axons, which are lengthy structures, transmit signals away from the nerve cell, while dendrites, which are shorter, convey messages to the cell. It is suggested by Save the Children (2016) that, according to research by Stiles & Jernigan published in 2010, neurons send outgoing messages via their axons and receive incoming information through their dendrites. The process of myelination, which involves coating axons in myelin - a fatty substance- is essential to developing neural networks. This insulation helps to increase the speed at which information travels along an axon, enabling children to process information more efficiently. However, the myelination of certain circuits in the brain occurs earlier than others according to Wessel (2024). For instance, in the case of language circuits, myelination persists throughout childhood and into adulthood, according to Paus et al.'s 1999 study as cited in Action for Children (2016)

Kelly (2024) suggests synapses serve as the junctions where electrical signals pass from one nerve cell to another, transmitting messages from the axon of one neuron to the dendrite of another neuron . According to Action for Children (2016) research conducted by Stiles & Jernigan in 2010 suggests that these connections form approximately twice as quickly in the brain of a two-year-old compared to that of an adult. As indicated by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child in 2007, an average of 700 novel connections are established every second during this critical stage of growth. The creation of synapses is closely associated with the development of memory and numerous other developmental milestones. During this stage, the brain is far more interconnected than that of an adult suggests Action for Children (2016)



4 - Image 7: Tsevis (2013)

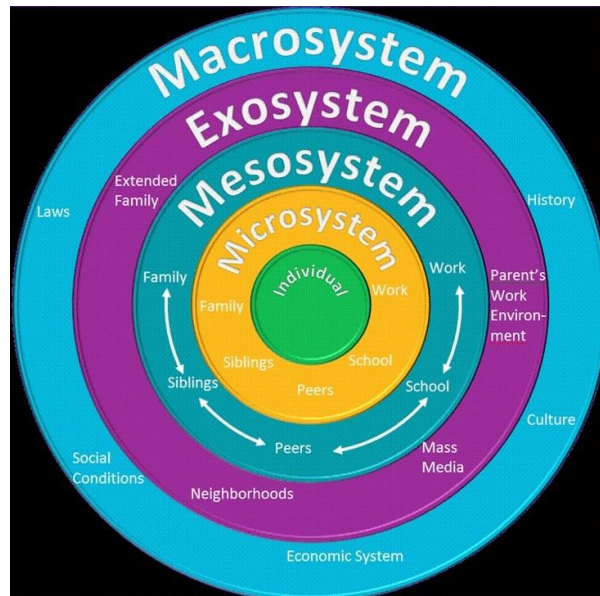


5 - Image 8: The A Level Biologist (2024)



6 - Image 9: Frontiers (2024)

It has been revealed that brain development significantly contributes to the development of good language skills in children (Shiver, 2001)



7 - Image 10: Marie (2017)

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, a child's development is shaped by multiple levels of their surrounding environment. This theory outlines five distinct systems that contribute to an individual's environment, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem - the closest environmental setting in which a child develops - is the most impactful level. The implications of this theory for educational practice are significant (Guy-Evans, 2024)

Enabling Adults



8 - Image 11: Beauty and Peace (2009)

During a child's formative years, their experiences and interactions with adults play a crucial role in shaping their perception and comprehension of the world around them. The adults who facilitate

learning, also known as enabling adults, have a unique opportunity to positively impact a child's growth and development during this critical period (Unicef, 2018)

Therefore, enabling adults create a safe and nurturing environment that fosters children's emotional and behavioural management skills and encourages them to express themselves freely. With consistency and compassion, they model kindness and empathy, helping learners cope with the changes and transitions that come with daily routines and life events (Unicef 2018)

Bowlby hypothesized that maintaining contact between infants and mothers is biologically imperative. His theory, outlined in 1969, posited that attachment behaviours, such as seeking proximity, are innate and arise in response to any perceived threat to achieving closeness, including separation, insecurity, and fear. As well as this, the bond between a child and their caregiver is particularly significant during the first thousand days of a child's life. The interactions between caregivers and children create an association between sounds, objects, and actions, enabling infants to learn their first words. Eye contact and responsive interactions are critical in enhancing a child's brain development and creating a nurturing and supportive environment that acknowledges and validates their experiences (Guy-Evans, 2024)



9 - Image 12: Wassell (2020)

As such, Ronald Lally and Marigione (2017) suggest that early experiences significantly impact a child's overall well-being, physical and mental health, behaviour, and education. The quality of a child's relationship with their parents or caregivers plays a crucial role in regulating their stress hormones, which can have long-term consequences. It can potentially alter the development of brain circuits and make it more challenging for children to manage stress as they mature.

Therefore, to effectively cater to children's developmental requirements, enabling adults must keenly observe, meticulously record, and sensitively attend to their children, making judicious choices regarding the timing and mode of intervention to facilitate self-constructed comprehension. They should foster a culture of collaboration among learners, encouraging and bolstering their joint problem-solving abilities (Education Wales 2023).

Enabling adults must also assist and support children in understanding that individuals can hold diverse thoughts and emotions. They should consider learners' preferences, interests, and choices while respecting them, aiding in the development of learners' sense of independence and confidence in decision-making (Birth to 5 matters, 2021)



10 - Image 13: Truth Inside of You (2014)

Furthermore, enabling adults play a pivotal role in aiding learners to build robust connections between their household and the broader society, fostering a sense of belonging by embracing both past and present experiences. They hold inclusivity and multiculturalism in high regard and advocate and commemorate the unparalleled identity of the Welsh language, culture, and heritage. By thoughtfully responding to learners' communication modes and fostering their confidence in communicating with others, enabling adults help learners achieve greater comprehension and establish meaningful connections with diverse languages and alternative communication methods (Education Wales, 2021)



11 - Image 14: PNG ALL (2024)

Engaging Experiences



The Highland Council (no date) suggest that Pedagogy emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and improving well-being. Effective child-centred pedagogy includes play, authentic learning, physical literacy, and outdoor activities. Play is fundamental for children's emotional and intellectual development. Outdoor play enhances social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. It also fosters curiosity, creativity, and a sense of belonging. Real-life situations promote questioning, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge. Physical literacy should be established in early years through diverse movement exploration

In addition, engaging learning experiences help children become more independent by providing challenges and opportunities for success. Such experiences should promote active learning and deep engagement and be based on real-life situations. To achieve this, practitioners must design learning experiences that offer suitable levels of challenge, uninterrupted engagement, and authentic connections to practical applications. This approach fosters a deep understanding of the material and enhances learners' motivation to continue learning (Zosh *et al.*, 2022)

As such, one of the key principles of child-centred pedagogy is tailoring experiences to individual children. These experiences should be carefully planned to promote the child's holistic growth and encourage cross-disciplinary connections. It is essential that these experiences respect and appreciate the uniqueness of each child and their family. By doing so, we not only cater to their specific needs but also highlight and pay tribute to the vibrant cultural and traditional heritage of the UK, including its two official languages (Department of Education, 2015)



12 - image 15: 30 Seconds (2021)

Inclusive and representative experiences are crucial in fostering engagement, especially with the diverse cultures present both locally and internationally. It is crucial to provide learning opportunities that are sensitive and purposeful in exploring different languages and cultures. By doing so, learners can reinforce their own identity and gain a broader understanding of the richness and diversity of the U.K, both historically and in the present (Rausch *et al.* 2021)

Rausch *et al.* (2021) suggest that in order to support children in developing their social and communication abilities, it is essential to offer them captivating opportunities. These opportunities should promote the growth of emotional fortitude and enable learners to identify their emotions and those of others. Meticulous planning of these experiences is vital to enhance learners' concentration and attentive abilities, whether they are indoors or outdoors and across a variety of settings



13 - Image 16: e-limu (2015)



14 - Image 17: tehspikey (2017)

It is crucial for every child to have access to enjoyable physical activities that enhance their overall health and wellness. They should be given regular opportunities to participate in various indoor and outdoor physical activities using various equipment and resources. These experiences should facilitate their development of an acute awareness of their bodies, coordination, core strength, balance, and gross and fine motor control by enabling them to use different tools and equipment with greater precision. Moreover, by learning to evaluate and handle risk, children will be better equipped to make informed decisions about their movements and actions (Health Direct, 2024)



15 - Image 18: Mom Junction (2024)



16 - Image 19: Rulz (no date)

According to Zosh *et al.* (2022) enhance the learning process, it is essential to provide children with opportunities to engage with the creativity of others. These experiences should be designed to stimulate all the senses and encourage children to express themselves creatively and communicate effectively. It is crucial to offer all children a variety of materials with unique properties to nurture their critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. All of these skills are fundamental to achieving the four key learning objectives

Interactive educational opportunities have the potential to help learners understand and value their surroundings while gaining a heightened awareness of environmental responsibility. These opportunities can also foster active problem-solving skills and an awareness of cause and effect. Learners should be encouraged to explore their movements and the movement of objects in space while being exposed to language that directs and describes motion. Stimulating experiences should inspire learners to observe, contemplate, and converse about their immediate environment and nearby surroundings, including natural phenomena (Twinkl, 2023)



17 - Image 20: Herald Post (2009)





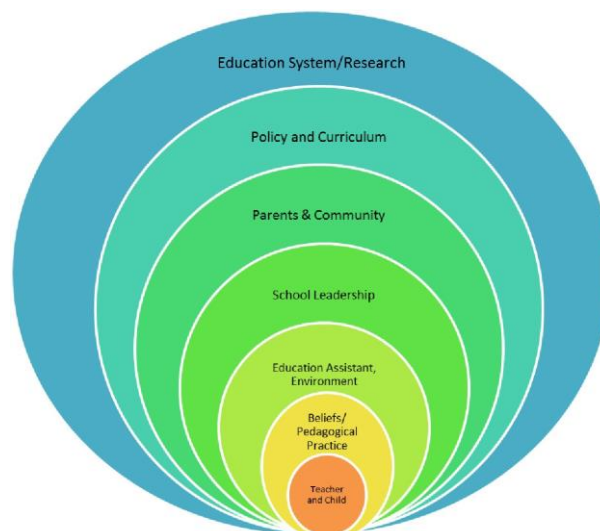
18 - Image 22: The Montessori School of Mallorca, (2022)



19 - Image 23: Elkan (2021)

Education Wales (2023) suggest that an essential component of a children's authentic experiences is the exploration of their environment, inside and outside. This exploration plays a significant role in driving developmental growth during the learning phase. As learners explore their surroundings, such as their local community or beyond, they develop a sense of belonging and an appreciation for the world that surrounds them

In the process of developing a curriculum, it is crucial to consider not only the physical aspect but also the emotional environment that will foster children's maximum potential. The learning atmosphere should offer diverse opportunities that encourage children to showcase their physical, creative, and imaginative abilities, as well as empower them to pursue their passions both individually and cooperatively (Education Wales, 2023)



20 - Image 24: Hall (2013)



21 - Image 25: Hampton International School, (2020)

According to the Reggio Emilia approach, which prioritises early childhood and primary education. It places children at the centre of their learning journey, emphasising self-directed, experiential learning. This approach encourages exploration, discovery, and knowledge construction through expressive arts. Children are viewed as strong and intelligent individuals with unlimited potential, and teachers work collaboratively with parents to adapt the learning process based on each child's interests and community context

As such, according to Birthto5matters (2021), an ideal learning environment should foster a culture of diversity and inclusivity, where learners are appreciated and empowered to express themselves. Children should feel a sense of belonging and representation in such an environment. Effective communication skills should be encouraged, and access to resources for developing vocabulary and concept comprehension should be readily available. Mathematical concepts should be taught in a practical and visual manner, offering children opportunities to experience numbers, shapes, and patterns in authentic contexts, both indoors and outdoors. The use of digital media and other resources should be utilised in developmentally appropriate ways to enhance the learning experience

Therefore, effective learning setting should offer children the chance to immerse themselves in awe-inspiring experiences. It should spark their curiosity about the natural and artificial world, propelling them to investigate, troubleshoot, and cultivate their imagination and analytical abilities. Moreover, the environment should allocate ample time and room for introspection and thoughtful consideration, while also presenting children with occasions to enhance their physical abilities by testing their motor skills (Early Years Matters, 2023)

Also, an effective learning environment should offer a diverse and adaptable experience that presents challenges while fostering the growth of resilience, confidence, and independence in the children. Moreover, it should facilitate mastery by providing ample and sustained opportunities for practice, rehearsal, and the application of acquired skills in diverse contexts (Birthto5matters, 2021)



22 - Image 26: Vertis (2021)



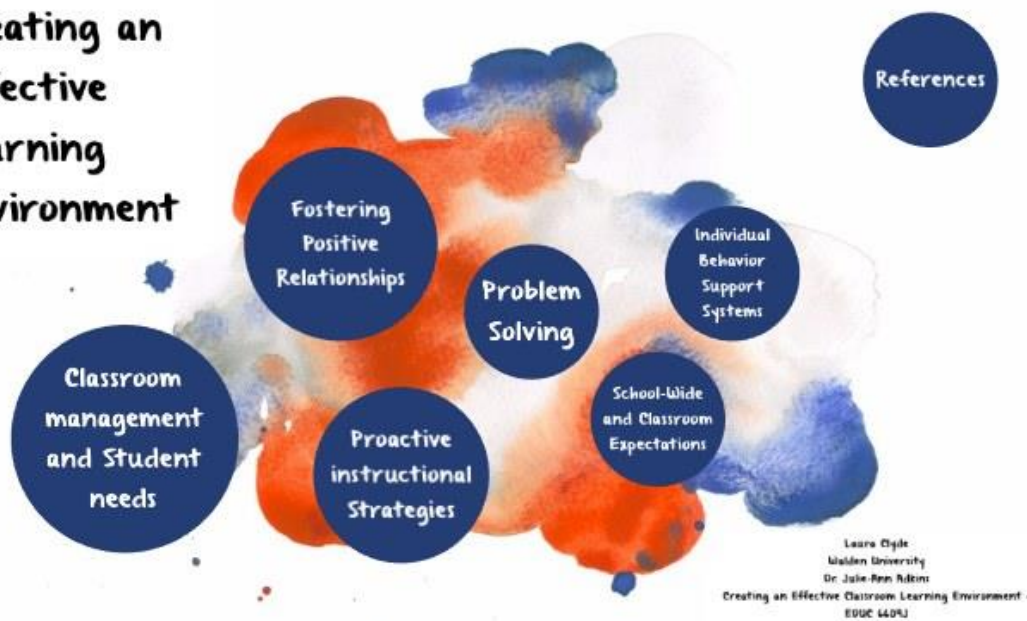
23 - Image 27: Klein (2019)



24 - Image 28: TTS (2017)

Effective Environments

Creating an Effective Learning Environment



The Montessori method is an alternative approach to education that fosters independence and personal growth in the classroom through mixed-age classrooms, three-hour time blocks, and specific learning materials. Created by Maria Montessori, this method has produced successful individuals in fields such as politics, technology, and the arts. Although it has drawbacks such as cost and lack of structure, there are still tens of thousands of Montessori programs worldwide (Ruhl, 2024)

In addition to this, Ruhl (2024) suggests that Montessori proposes that the focus of infant care should be on the child, with an understanding of the critical importance of the first few years of life. The environment, comprising not only the physical space, furnishings and materials but also the people who share their days with the child, plays a crucial role in shaping the child's development. Children acquire language and life skills effortlessly by interacting with their surroundings

According to Education Wales (2023), an essential component of children's authentic experiences is the exploration of their environment, inside and outside. This exploration plays a significant role in driving developmental growth during the learning phase. As learners explore their surroundings, such as their local community or beyond, they develop a sense of belonging and an appreciation for the world that surrounds them

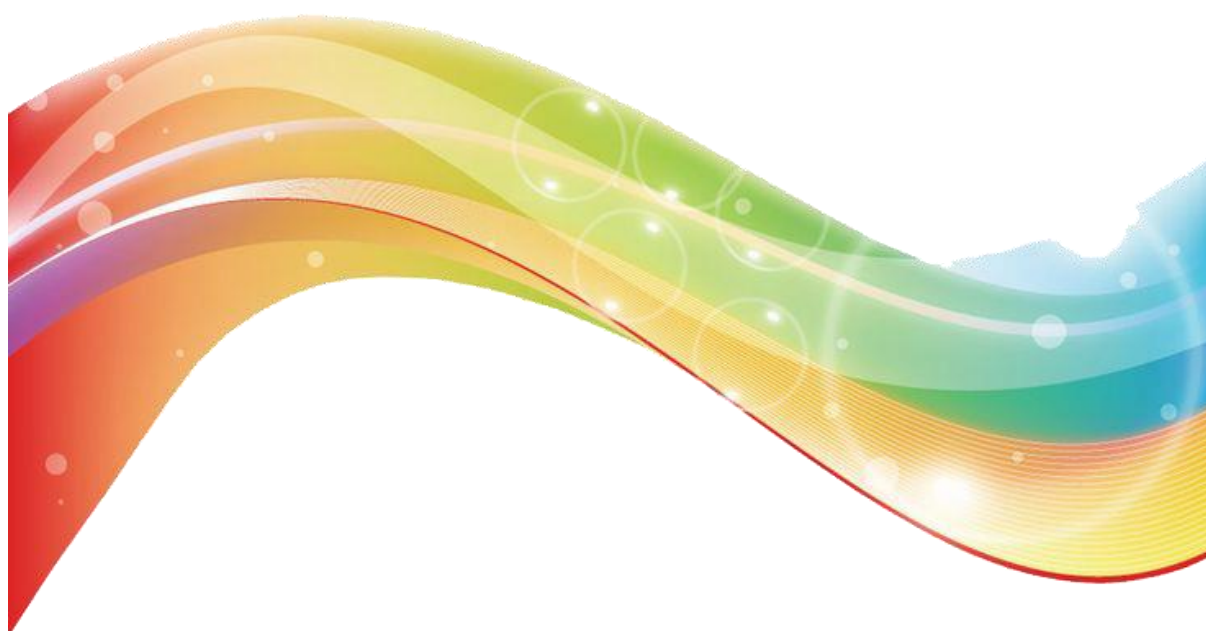
Therefore, when developing a curriculum, it is crucial to consider the physical aspect and the emotional environment that will foster children's maximum potential. The learning atmosphere should offer diverse opportunities that empower children to showcase their physical, creative, and imaginative abilities and pursue their passions both individually and cooperatively. This empowerment is a testament to the impact educators have on shaping the future (Education Wales, 2023)

According to the Reggio Emilia approach, which prioritizes early childhood and primary education. It places children at the centre of their learning journey, emphasizing self-directed, experiential learning. This approach encourages exploration, discovery, and knowledge construction through expressive arts. Children are viewed as strong and intelligent individuals with unlimited potential,

and teachers work collaboratively with parents to adapt the learning process based on each child's interests and community context (Reggio Emilio Approach, 2022)

As such, an ideal learning environment should foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity, where learners are not just accepted but celebrated for their unique perspectives and experiences. In such an environment, children should feel a sense of belonging and representation. Effective communication skills should be encouraged, and access to resources for developing vocabulary and concept comprehension should be readily available. Mathematical concepts should be taught in a practical and visual manner, offering children opportunities to experience numbers, shapes, and patterns in authentic contexts, both indoors and outdoors. The use of digital media and other resources should be utilized in developmentally appropriate ways to enhance the learning experience (Europass, 2024)

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