

Unit 18- Working with babies from birth to 12 months

The first year of a baby's life is crucial to their development in later childhood; parents should help to promote healthy development in their baby. A baby's initial health and development is determined by the health of the mother during pregnancy, factors such as alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco consumption can have a negative effect on the baby's health; various studies have looked into the effects of alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco on an unborn baby with unclear results though expectant mothers are warned not to consume any of these to lower any risks. The babies of women who drink heavily during pregnancy can often suffer with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, a condition which affects physical and intellectual development in the womb therefore also affecting the child after birth and throughout their development. Consuming caffeine and smoking while pregnant can also harm the unborn baby, smoking decreases the amount of oxygen the baby receives hence stunting its physical development. Pregnant women are advised to take certain vitamins and supplements to help with the baby's development, Folic Acid and Vitamin D are important in the development of an unborn baby as Vitamin D helps the baby grow strong bones and Folic Acid can help prevent some birth defects, these vitamins occur naturally in food however not usually in a high enough dose, which is why supplements are taken. A healthy diet is also very important to the health of the baby, mothers should be eating a wide range of healthy foods being sure to include fruit and vegetables, starchy food (carbohydrates), protein, and dairy products.

After a baby is born, the mother will then decide whether they're going to breast feed the baby or not, a mother's breast milk provides the baby with all the nutrients what it needs during the first 6 months of its life, mothers who either choose not to or cannot breastfeed can use a substitute powder- used to make milk- specially formulated for new born babies, by 9 months, the baby should be beginning to explore solid foods alongside their breast or formula milk. Children who're provided with a poor diet can suffer many consequences, it's important that children are provided with a healthy and nutritious diet, it's the responsibility of the adults in the child's life to ensure the child is receiving the correct diet for their needs.

Though young babies aren't able to walk, talk, or engage in lots of types of play, they still require stimulation. Babies usually explore new objects by putting them into their mouths so it's very important to ensure that the baby's surroundings are clean and free from anything that could endanger them. Young babies will only be able to lay on their back so will require something soft to lay on and stimulation from their primary care giver or someone they recognise, this is important with younger babies as they are very wary of unfamiliar people and this could upset them. As babies grow older and become more mobile it's important that the environment they're exploring is safe from harmful chemicals, electrical wires and other hazard, by providing the child with a safe environment, the practitioner is able to let the child move and play independently. All settings should have policies on how to safely store harmful substances and procedures on what to do if, for example, they're ingested, these policies and procedures create a safe environment for children. Children should have regular access to an outdoor environment, this was the focus of the revised EYFS which states that practitioners should

"Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, build, move and role play"
(Department for education (2012) Development matters in the Foundation Stage (EYFS) p.6)

Around the ages of 10 months, the baby's personality will be starting to form, this includes showing strong likes and dislikes for different things such as familiar and unfamiliar situations and people. The baby will show happiness when they see their mother and become distressed when she leaves, showing that they're becoming very attached