

Babies and young
children up to the age
of 3 years



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How and why do variations occur in the rate and sequence of development and learning? Causes of variations in rate and sequence of learning and development include:

- Disabilities - Learning disabilities can be divided into three broad categories: Developmental speech and language disorders, Academic skills disorders, " Other," a catch-all that includes certain coordination disorders and learning handicaps not covered by the other terms

Once, scientists thought that all learning disabilities were caused by a single neurological problem.

But research supported by NIMH has helped us see that the causes are more diverse and complex. New evidence seems to show that most learning disabilities do not stem from a single, specific area of the brain, but from difficulties in bringing together information from various brain regions.

Pre birth experiences: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use - Many drugs taken by the mother pass directly to the foetus. Research shows that a mother's use of cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs during pregnancy may have damaging effects on the unborn child that may affect the child mentally or physically as they develop.

Experiences - Throughout the twentieth century, psychologists such as Bowlby, Freud, Erikson, and Sroufe have stressed the profound importance of early socioemotional experiences on later psychological outcomes.

- Environmental / External influences - The ability to adapt to our environment is a part of normal development.

Children growing up in cold climates, on rural farms, or in large sibling groups learn how to function in those environments. But regardless of the general environment, all children need stimulation and nurturance for healthy development. If these are lacking—if a child's parents/carers are

indifferent or hostile—the child's brain development may be impaired. Because the brain adapts to its environment, it will adapt to a negative environment just as readily as it will adapt to a positive one. The physical environment shapes children's behaviour. Large, noisy, over stimulating rooms can produce undesirable behaviour in children. Smaller spaces help children to focus and cut down on distractions •Parental influences - Consistency is also important in the regulation of children's behaviour. The rules for behaviour must be consistent over time and among adults.

Consistent enforcement of rules is reassuring to children that this is a predictable place, a place that you can trust. With respect to socioemotional development, psychologists such as Freud, Sroufe, Bowlby, Erikson, and Mary Main have claimed that children's early attachment relationships with their primary caregivers lay the foundation for later social functioning. Researchers have found that securely attached children are more cooperative with their mothers, achieve higher cognitive and academic scores, are more curious, and maintain better relationships with teachers and peers, as compared to insecurely attached children.

Why may learning take place in different ways? Children learn in a variety of ways, they can copy adults and other children; they can also learn from their own experiences as they will repeat activities that fascinate them or are enjoyable. Most of what babies and toddlers learn comes from 'doing' rather than being taught by adults. It is important to provide a range of different opportunities and experiences for them so they can learn based on their own preferences. What is the importance of play Play is essential for children's development.

Through play, children can develop a variety of skills that support every area of development. Good play opportunities allow children not only to have fun but to explore, but also learn about materials, concepts and how to socialise. Play begins very early on in babies' lives as long as they have an adult who can engage with them. As children develop, they are able to choose and create their own play. Next, explain the possible effects on development of the following A) pre conceptual experiences:

The lifestyle of parents can have an effect on their baby's potential development, this is because men's sperm and women's ova can be easily damaged. Mothers are advised to take supplements, stopping smoking and drinking alcohol and avoiding recreational drugs. Parents are advised not to leave starting a family too late because women find it harder to conceive as they get older and the quality of a woman's eggs can deteriorate over time. B) pre birth experiences: Between conception and birth babies can be affected by the mother's health as well as her lifestyle.

Factors such as stress, diet and alcohol can affect development. The first 12 weeks of pregnancy is when the foetus is at its most vulnerable. smoking starves the foetus of oxygen which affects growth and development, babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy usually give birth to lighter and premature babies who have an increased disposition towards asthma. A mother's diet is also important during pregnancy, for instance, a lack of folic acid found in green leafy vegetables can cause spinal bifida.

Women should also avoid foods that can cause food poisoning stopping the foetus from getting any nutrients and minerals. They should also avoid unpasteurised cheese and blue cheeses as they can contain the bacteria
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listeria which can cause miscarriage, premature delivery or severe illness in a newborn. A mother who drinks alcohol during pregnancy puts their baby at risk of Foetal Alcohol syndrome which is caused by alcohol during pregnancy and has now been recognised to negatively affect aspects of a child's cognitive development including their concentration.

C) birth experiences The birthing process can in itself be wrought with complications such as breach birth or anoxia (a lack of oxygen to the baby) by the baby being slow to breathe at birth or the umbilical cord becoming entangled. Anoxia can be fatal or leave the baby with permanent brain damage. Multiple births can also affect the babies' development this is because multiple births are often induced prematurely so that the foetuses don't grow so big as to squash their siblings.

This means that the babies have not developed as fully as single births and are usually born lighter. Very premature babies are at a higher risk of developing hearing or sight problems and also learning difficulties than those who are born full term. Explain the primary importance of carers in the lives of babies and young children and investigate the possible effects of poor quality attachments on the development of babies and children Parents and other carers, such as grandparents or foster parents are key people in the children's lives.

They have the closest and strongest attachments to the children and these will usually be lifelong attachments Feeling loved and special helps children to gain confidence and self-esteem and this in turn is vital to socialising with others, building positive relationships and being ready to learn. If a child had a poor quality attachment to it's parents/carers the same can not be said;

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the example of a positive relationship has not been set so a child may not know how to build them with the people they meet.

Evaluate ways of working in partnership with carers/parents Settings and key persons need to work in partnership with parents they can do this by: Involving parents in observing their children: parents should be shown observations that staff have carried out and may also be encouraged to observe their child and feed back information about what they are doing at home. This is important as parents will be doing different things with their children at home which is reflected in the child's skills and interests.

Involving parents in planning with you: Parents may have different perceptions about a child's needs and may also have a range of ideas as to the type of activities the child will enjoy. Involving parents in the running of the setting: parents that actively get involved in the setting have a closer relationship with the staff at the setting. Involving parents in the recruitment of staff: settings that use parents as part of a recruitment process recognise that parents are the key users of the service and so, by having a parent representative on the interview panel, they can gain a parental perspective.

Asking parents for feedback: asking parents for feedback ensures the improvement of care for their children and rules out error by making assumptions about what the parents want. Explain how babies express their emotions, preferences and needs Very early on, babies learn to differentiate their cries. Some cries mean they are tired while other cries indicate that they are bored or want some company or are hungry. Babies smile, laugh and gurgle when they are happy and raise their arms when they want to be

picked up. Responsive care means being good at recognising what a baby needs and attending to them quickly.