LEARNING THEORIES
FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTICE
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LEARNING THEORIES
FOR
EARLY YEARS PRACTICE
SEAN MACBLAIN
For all our children

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean MacBlain PhD is a distinguished author and academic whose publications include: MacBlain (Sage, 2014) *How Children Learn*; Gray and MacBlain (Sage, 2015) *Learning Theories in Childhood*, now going into its 3rd edition; MacBlain, Long and Dunn, (Sage, 2015) *Dyslexia, Literacy and Inclusion: Child-centred Perspectives*; MacBlain, Dunn and Luke (Sage, 2017) *Contemporary Childhood*. A number of Sean’s publications are used by students, academics and practitioners worldwide. Sean is currently a senior academic at Plymouth Marjon University where he previously held the positions of Research Lead for the Centre for Professional and Educational Research, Research Coordinator for the School of Education and Deputy Chair of the Ethics Committee. Sean also worked previously as a Senior Lecturer in Education and Developmental Psychology at Stranmillis University College, Queens University Belfast. In addition to this, Sean has also worked for over twenty years as an educational psychologist and continues in this field as an independent practitioner. Sean is married to Angela and lives in Somerset, England.
As a teacher educator, I am often confronted with a response of apathy when I introduce students, particularly those in the initial years of their degree programme, to any form of theoretical issue or philosophical debate. Familiar comments include: ‘But why do we need to know something that happened 100 years ago?’ or ‘it is only when I am in the classroom that I really learn – all this theoretical stuff is just a waste of time’. These students appear only interested in the everyday practices of the classroom context and fail to appreciate what this book (entitled Learning Theories for Early Years Practice) is all about, i.e. we need to look at notable philosophies and theorists to help us unravel and deconstruct our own understandings of what good early years practice entails. As McMillan (2009) argues, an ability to reflect on appropriate theories is essential to equip students to become competent professionals who can engage with complex early years issues. Failing to embrace these theoretical issues may result in what could be described as narrow and shallow perceptions of what constitutes high quality practice in the early years of education, which Walsh (2017) suggests will do little to address the real learning needs and interests of the young child.

As the opening chapter of this book aptly reminds us, the early years of education are often characterized as sugar and spice and all things nice, where ‘each day is filled with the joys of seeing young minds develop’, bringing with it ‘lots of fun and immeasurable satisfaction’ where early years practitioners are ‘tasked daily with finding new and exciting ways of developing young children’s thinking and learning’. Such a description of early years education certainly confirms why ‘being a practitioner in early years settings is surely one of the most rewarding and satisfying jobs’, as the author of Learning Theories for Early Years Practice clearly articulates in his final paragraph of the concluding chapter. Yet with such a mental image often comes a misapprehension that no particular skills, understanding or professional knowledge may be needed on the part of the early years teacher to fulfil the requirements of such a role, and on occasions can result in a disparaging attitude towards early years professionalism (McMillan, 2017). It is for this reason that the book in question is so timely. The author makes no excuse for suggesting that working in the early years can be an extremely worthwhile, satisfying and challenging experience but he makes it perfectly clear that a rich theoretical underpinning and a rigorous conceptual understanding are required to teach effectively in an early years setting, reinforcing the need for a ‘professional not an amateur’ (McMillan, 2017, p. 204). Tapping into a book which provides students and existing early years practitioners with a plethora of theories, both historical and more modern, alongside a clear application to everyday practice, has not been easy to find on our library shelves and I have no difficulty in saying that Learning Theories for Early Years Practice definitely fills this gap.

What makes this book stand out from the rest is not only the detailed and rich text which draws together an array of familiar and not so familiar theories on early years education, but also the clear structure and complementary features which make the text so appropriate, in particular for a student audience. The book is divided into three parts, namely Early Influences, Modern Influences and Challenges for Theorists in a Changing World. Each part follows an identical structure where the reader is first introduced to a background synopsis on the theorist and then an attempt is made to help the reader understand the theory more fully. The reader then moves on to address what the theory really looks like in practice, drawing on examples from the early years context. Strengths and weaknesses of the theories are then considered and links to other theories are highlighted. Complementary features include selected activities, often online, discussion points and recommended readings, making the text a truly interactive experience. In this way, the book is not simply a narrative of theoretical content, but also ensures that theories are made real in the 21st century and in an early years context.
In summary, this is certainly a comprehensive and thought-provoking text, which provides a rich analysis of past and present theories and philosophies, informing the phase we know as early childhood education. Yet I would argue that this text does even more, where the final section goes one step further by challenging existing theories in an ever-changing landscape – a complex landscape where the true essence of childhood, and in particular young children’s learning and development, have become subservient to issues concerning children’s health, well-being and general safety. In my opinion, this book is a must read for all those interested in early childhood education. Those who never really understood the value of theory for ECE cannot help but do so after reading this book. Enjoy!

Glenda Walsh, Head of Early Years Education, Stranmillis University College

REFERENCES


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- Holly Bowman and Claire Hooker at Emneth Nursery School and Children’s Centre: www.emneth-nur.norfolk.sch.uk

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INTRODUCTION

There can be few jobs as rewarding as working in an early years setting. Each day is filled with the joys of seeing young minds develop and the challenges of applying one’s own knowledge and skills to finding new ways of facilitating and extending children’s thinking and learning. In recent years, there has been an explosion in our knowledge of children’s development in the early years and a significant growth in our understanding of how young children learn. Colleges and universities now offer new and exciting courses and programmes for students and prospective practitioners, which are organized and delivered by highly experienced staff with a wealth of expertise. Two decades ago, I (the author) was fortunate to be lecturing at Bridgwater College in Somerset, UK when colleagues at the college first introduced the concept of ‘Forest Schools’. At the time, it was a joy to observe my colleagues’ enthusiasm as they introduced this new concept of Forest School within the Children’s Centre, following their visits to Scandinavia. Having also worked as an educational psychologist across a wide range of early years settings, I fully appreciated the benefits that Forest Schools could offer to all young children. My work as a psychologist also permitted me to see, at first hand, the extremely valuable and informed practice that takes place every day within the early years sector.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In early years settings, every day is different and brings with it new challenges, lots of fun and immeasurable satisfaction at seeing young children grow and develop through a host of activities at the heart of which is ‘language’ and ‘play’. Practitioners find themselves tasked daily with exploring new and exciting ways of developing children’s thinking, their social and emotional development, and supporting them as they progress through the years towards formal education.

Why children learn in the way they do has exercised thinking for generations. We are still not entirely clear as to how children learn and what activities bring about the best learning outcomes. How, for example, do we know when learning is taking place and what exactly do we understand by the term ‘learning’? It is important to emphasize that learning is not just the act of acquiring new information and knowledge within classrooms; learning is far more complex than that. Jarvis (2005, pp. 2–3), for example, has emphasized the extremely complex nature of learning, asking if we should aim to understand learning ‘as a set of cognitive mechanisms or rather as an emotional, social and motivational experience ... What should be the focus of learning, facts or skills?’

To help us understand how children learn, we need to look at what notable philosophers and theorists have proposed is good practice. Understanding what is meant by philosophy and by theory is, however, not straightforward and though the work of practitioners is informed to varying degrees by different philosophies and theories, confusion still surrounds the question of what exactly philosophy and theory are. In a lighthearted and tongue-in-cheek way, the philosopher De Botton (2000, p. 205) cited one of the most renowned philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche who suggested that ‘the majority of philosophers have
always been “cabbage-heads”’. De Botton, however, has also proposed that philosophers can show us what we feel and perhaps, more importantly, ‘give shape to aspects of our lives that we recognise as our own, yet could never have understood so clearly on our own’ (p. 9). What De Botton is suggesting here is that philosophers provide us with a means by which we can more fully understand how we think and why we do what we do.

Theory, on the other hand, has been well explained by Newby (2010, p. 71) who drew an important distinction between education theory, which deals with such areas as learning and child development, schooling and curricula, and research theory, which specifies procedures. Newby proposed how education theory can shape our understanding of learning and provide us with a means through which we can make more informed decisions. In contrast, he also proposed how research theory ‘is a rule book whose legitimacy stems from principles accepted by the academic community and whose coherence owes much to custom and practice’.

Though philosophers and theorists have attempted to explain learning in different ways, they have also demonstrated many similarities; how learning takes place and which practice by adults offers the best outcomes; and which type of environmental factors support effective learning. Each theory, though different, has added significantly to how we make sense of children’s learning. In their simplest form, theories are ways of explaining the complex nature of phenomena that we do not fully understand and phenomena that occur within ever shifting historical, economic and political contexts.

It is also important to understand that theorists, like philosophers, are influenced by the worlds they are born into and the events that take place around them. Importantly, they are also influenced by their own unique and personal histories and life experiences when growing up. It is interesting, for example, how some theorists and philosophers who dedicated much of their lives to understanding and explaining children’s learning, experienced significant trauma in their own early lives. Friedrich Froebel, for example, experienced the death of his mother only nine months after his birth and received virtually no emotional support from adults until the age of 10 years when he went to live with his uncle, a caring and affectionate person who provided Friedrich with the sense of security that had been lost to him after the death of his mother. Similarly, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau also lost his mother in early childhood; he was only nine days old at the time. By the age of 10, Jean-Jacques had experienced further separation and emotional upheaval when his father moved away from the family home, leaving Jean-Jacques to be reared by relatives. Johann Pestalozzi lost his father when he was 5 years of age and Rachel and Margaret McMillan, born respectively in 1859 and 1860, lost their father and their sister Elizabeth in 1865 when they were both still children.

The theorist John Dewey was born less than a year after his parents had experienced the death of his older brother, and the noted behaviourist Burrhus Skinner experienced emotional tragedy when his brother Edward, who was just two and a half years younger than him, died at age 16. The noted educationalist and psychoanalyst, Susan Isaacs, who is known for developing nursery schools, also lost her mother when still a child. Such tragedies in the lives of these early philosophers and theorists must certainly have influenced their views of childhood and may have shaped within them a desire to devote their lives to understanding and improving the lives of young children. It is also notable, for example, that Jerome Bruner, whose ideas on education and learning still influence much practice today, was born blind (due to cataracts), a fact that must have played heavily on how he was parented as a young child.

**AIMS OF THE BOOK**

Understanding and applying learning theories are crucial to any transition from being a student to actual practice in real-life settings. This book aims to prepare the reader for practice in early years settings with children aged 0 to 5 years, by demonstrating how key learning theories underpin practice; readers will be supported in this process by photographs and examples of learning activities with clear explanations.

Divided into three main sections, *Early Influences*, *Modern Influences*, and *Challenges for Theorists in a Changing World*, the book identifies key theorists in early childhood, past and present, before linking them
their thinking, it is important also to recognize that practice in the early years has been greatly influenced by political decisions. Practice in early years in the UK has been significantly impacted on by some important initiatives, which, though having their origins in theory, grew from directions adopted by successive governments. Three such initiatives are: HighScope, Sure Start and the growth of Children’s Centres, and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Integrated Review at 2 to 2½.

Although originally developed in Michigan in the USA, HighScope has come to influence practice in the UK and throughout the world. Drawing initially on the work of Jean Piaget and John Dewey, HighScope has also drawn on other theorists such as Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner and, more recently, academics researching children’s learning. Within the UK, many of the principles of HighScope have been employed across many sections of the education system. It is used, for example, to address the needs of children with additional needs and those children who have been recognized as vulnerable. As with other approaches, HighScope seeks to support young children in building their knowledge and skills and in gaining much better understanding of their environments, their cultures and the communities and societies into which they are born. Central to the HighScope approach...
is the idea that learning is a process in which children should actively engage and that High Scope practitioners become as active as the children they are working with. The High Scope approach also ‘promotes independence, curiosity, decision-making, co-operation, persistence, creativity’, in addition to ‘problem solving’ (Miller and Pound, 2011, p. 103). Such principles are now fully endorsed by most early years practitioners and primary teachers as being central to their practice. (Take time to view the following URL link: https://highscope.org, which offers a wealth of information and material on HighScope.) Similar to HighScope is ‘Sure Start’.

SURE START AND THE GROWTH OF CHILDREN’S CENTRES

The Sure Start initiative, which introduced ‘Sure Start Local Programmes’ in 1998 in the UK, was brought about largely by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, under a Labour government. Though originally aimed at young children and families in England, other regions across the UK – Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – also embraced this initiative and adapted the underlying principles to serve their own areas. The initiative had its origins in a range of political factors within the UK, perhaps most notably a commitment by government to tackle poverty. It was also influenced by similar initiatives in the USA – the US ‘Head Start’ programme had been running since the mid-1960s and had been developed to provide support for pre-school children of low-income families; and, more recently, the ‘Early Head Start’ programme extended support for children from birth to 3 years and, importantly, support for pregnant mothers.

Sure Start was introduced with the intention of providing those children who most needed it with a much better start in their early years, which would benefit them as they progressed through childhood and into adulthood. At the time, the then Labour government had demonstrated a huge commitment to tackling poverty in the UK and saw supporting children in their first years as well as their families as key to improving society in general. Targeted improvements for supporting families with childcare were viewed as important, as was the need to improve the health of many children and implement measures that would improve their well-being. In addition to this, it was recognized that support was needed to develop those poorer and more disadvantaged communities into which many children were being born and spending their first years. The level of funding given for this initiative was, at the time, considerable, being around £540 million between 1999 and 2002. It had been estimated that around 150,000 children who were living in relative deprivation would benefit from Sure Start. Though the government at the time agreed to provide funding for 10 years, the Chancellor reported in 2003 that responsibility for Sure Start would be relocated to local government by 2005, with the aim of establishing Sure Start centres in every community that needed it.

Following 2003, ‘Sure Start Local Programmes’, in addition to some nurseries and other pre-school provision, came under the umbrella term, Sure Start Children’s Centres (SSCCs), with centres increasingly appearing across the UK. In 2011 there were, for example, nearly 4000 centres. Cuts in budgets, however, resulting from austerity measures brought about by more recent governments have resulted
in the closure of many centres, with some centres having to merge and manage with limited staff. Indeed, Fitzgerald and Kay (2016, pp. 43–4) commented recently on how over half of day care places were lost when the previous Coalition government withdrew the legal requirement for SSCCs to provide this service, despite a growth in usage by parents, with an increase of 50,000 from 2013–2014 to reach 1.05 million. They also drew attention to the fact that estimates for cuts in budgets to SSCCs have been around 35 per cent since 2010.

Fitzgerald and Kay (2016, p. 43) recently reported findings from the National Audit Office published in 2006, who, in evaluating SSCCs, found that the majority of families were pleased with the services on offer. They also indicated how fathers and ethnic minority groups, in addition to families of children with disabilities and those with the ‘highest level of difficulty’, were failing to have their needs met by centres. Fitzgerald and Kay also indicated how some centres had not developed working relationships with health services that were effective.

Ofsted (2006, 2008) has drawn attention to the strengths and weaknesses of SSCCs, drawing attention to the need for local authorities to monitor their effectiveness, how they are managed and engaging in a process of evaluating outcomes for children and their families. Ofsted has also raised the issue of how the coordination of services, accessed by some centres, had not always been undertaken efficiently, in addition to the fact that some family ‘types’ were not availing themselves of what was on offer at the centres.

It is possible to locate the ideas that underpin Sure Start in the ideas of many of the theorists covered in this book. Pestalozzi, for example, grew up in poverty and recognized the importance of education as a means of supporting very young children and their families. Similarly, John Dewey and Bronfenbrenner recognized how the communities and cultures into which children were born and developed impacted significantly on their learning and development, and also on how children would, in turn, become active and purposeful members of their societies, a view that also lay at the very heart of Rousseau’s philosophy.

### STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

On 1 September 2012, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage became mandatory in England for all early years providers in maintained and non-maintained schools, and independent schools as well as all providers on the Early Years Register, though it was recognized that there might be some exemptions to this final group. Though the Framework has been superseded by the more recent EYFS Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five (2014) and ‘Revised EYFS Framework 2017’ (see www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework – accessed 07.08.17), it is worth exploring the 2012 Framework in some detail for it is in this document...
Learning Theories for Early Years Practice

that we find the key thinking behind much current practice.

The new Framework built on existing practice, with the vision being that ‘every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential’ (DfE, 2012, p. 2; revised 2014). The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework recognized that development in children nowadays is quicker than in previous generations and that children’s life experiences after birth and up to the time they begin formal schooling at 5 years of age are crucially important and have a significant influence on their later lives. Of particular importance to practitioners was the fact that Ofsted would inspect the implementation and application of the new Framework and provide reports on the quality and standards of provision inspected with their reports being published; in some instances, Ofsted might issue a ‘notice to improve’ or a ‘welfare requirements notice’. Providers who failed to comply with a ‘welfare requirements notice’ would be deemed as committing an offence.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage proposed four overarching principles, which should be central to practice in early years settings:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured [Readers should refer to the section on developing emotional intelligence in Chapter 7 where the concept of resilience is more fully explored]

- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. (DfE, 2012, p. 3)

The Framework also proposed seven key areas crucial to learning and development in young children: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. MacBlain et al. (2017, p. 23) explained these as follows:

The first three of these were to be viewed as ‘Prime’ areas, which would be particularly crucial, with the next four being seen as ‘Specific’ areas, which providers should take close account of in supporting children with the development of the Prime areas. The Framework stressed the importance of providers paying particular attention to the individual needs of children, in addition to the stage of development at which children are perceived to be functioning. With the introduction of the Framework, particular attention was to be given to the Prime areas, and especially when managing the learning experiences of very young children, which, the Framework proposed, ‘reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school’. (DfE, 2012, p. 6)

The Framework also placed emphasis on the importance of assessment:

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. (DfE, 2012, p. 10)
and emphasized how:

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote children's successful learning and development. (DfE, 2012, p. 10)

The Framework also placed emphasis on two areas: child protection, stressing that ‘providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children’ (p. 13); and the importance of training and qualifications for those working with young children.

**THE INTEGRATED REVIEW AT 2 TO 2½**

The UK Department of Health (DoH) recently commissioned the National Children’s Bureau (NCB, 2015) to undertake a review of early childhood with the purpose of identifying children’s progress at age 2 to 2½ as a means of promoting more positive outcomes for them when they were older regarding their health and well-being and learning and behaviour. A key rationale behind this review was to change how many adults think about young children’s early development and to bring about improved practice.

The review was introduced alongside the ‘Health Visitor Implementation Plan’ (see www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthvisitor-implementation-plan-2011-to-2015) – a four-year long initiative focusing on greater recruitment and retention of health visitors and promotion of their continuing professional development. In addition, far greater entitlement to free early education for 2-year-olds was proposed. From September 2010, every 3- and 4-year-old had, for example, become entitled to 15 hours per week of funded early education. This was subsequently increased to include 2-year-old children considered to be disadvantaged. This entitlement was phased in gradually, with around 20 per cent of 2-year-olds becoming eligible by September 2013 and some 40 per cent eligible a year later, in September 2014. The increase in children attending early years settings would then, it was proposed, result in more children benefitting from an integrated review that would have an increased focus on health as well as learning.

Importantly, it was also proposed that assessments of children’s public health would take place and would then inform decisions regarding the funding and shaping of services for young children and their families. It was proposed, for example, that data would be gathered through the Integrated Review, in addition to the Healthy Child Programme Review (www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-rapid-review-to-update-evidence, also at 2 years of age for children who are not in early education). Questionnaires were to be completed by parents along with their health visitors and focus on the following key elements: communication, gross and fine motor coordination, problem solving, and personal and social development. In October 2015, responsibility for commissioning public health services for children aged 0–5 including health visiting was transferred to local authorities, which included the Healthy Child Programme and the Integrated Review. It was of note that whilst health visitors should continue being employed by their providers (mostly the NHS), responsibility for planning and payment of services would lie with local authorities (see the Kings Fund website for information relating to the new NHS health and well-being boards at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/new-nhs/health-and-wellbeing-boards).

Key to the thinking behind these recent initiatives has been an increased acknowledgement that learning and development in the early years are rapid and
YouTube videos with additional insights into biographies and ideas of theorists

John Locke is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaWj0qBAUpo
Jean-Jacques Rousseau is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqOaG24aPSc
Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fGbt2l3WBs
Froebel Kindergarten Gifts Early Childhood Education History of Toys: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNBzmCKLNdU
Margaret McMillan is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGG41ViX2H4
Friedrich Froebel is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sf6oEPvHz58
Johann Pestalozzi Theory & Impact on Education Video & Lesson Transcript Education: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fGbt2l3WBs

John Dewey and Rachel McMillan are born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXqeTYHn0p4
Margaret McMillan is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1JWr4G8YLM
Rudolf Steiner is born and the American Civil War begins: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mkFQXqJxas
President Lincoln is assassinated: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oteFQ7x9ibk

Maria Montessori is born and, in the same year, Charles Dickens dies: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1JWr4G8YLM
Education becomes compulsory in England for children under 10 years of age: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oteFQ7x9ibk
Jack the Ripper begins his serial murders in London: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1JWr4G8YLM

Piaget and Vygotsky are born and Bridget Driscoll becomes the first person in the world to be killed in a motor accident in London: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Burrhus Skinner is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo

World War I breaks out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Jerome Bruner is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Urie Bronfenbrenner is born and Russian revolution takes place, with the Czar of Russia and his family being executed: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo

World War I ends and Spanish Flu breaks out, killing 50 to 100 million people: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
John Dewey and Rachel McMillan are born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXqeTYHn0p4
Spanish Flu breaks out, killing 50 to 100 million people: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo

Maria Montessori: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1JWr4G8YLM

Howard Gardner is born: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
World War II breaks out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Word War II ends: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Maria Montessori dies: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo

Loris Malaguzzi begins working as a teacher: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo
Te Whāriki commences: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTEUKYHyYo

Timeline

1632 John Locke is born
1712 Jean-Jacques Rousseau is born
1723 Poaching becomes a capital offence and those caught may be hanged
1745 Jacobite rising in Scotland led by Bonnie Prince Charlie ends with battle of Culloden
1746 Johann Pestalozzi is born
1782 Friedrich Froebel is born
1832 Queen Victoria comes to the throne
1840 Vaccination for the poor is introduced in England
1845 Irish potato famine begins with an estimated one million adults and children dying
1854 Crimean War begins
1865 President Lincoln is assassinated
1870 Maria Montessori is born and, in the same year, Charles Dickens dies
1880 Education becomes compulsory in England for children under 10 years of age
1888 Jack the Ripper begins his serial murders in London
1896 Piaget and Vygotsky are born and Bridget Driscoll becomes the first person in the world to be killed in a motor accident in London
1904 Burrhus Skinner is born
1914 World War I breaks out
1915 Jerome Bruner is born
1917 Urie Bronfenbrenner is born and Russian revolution takes place, with the Czar of Russia and his family being executed
1918 World War I ends and Spanish Flu breaks out, killing 50 to 100 million people
1920 Loris Malaguzzi born
1921 Reuven Feuerstein is born
1925 Albert Bandura is born
1929 Nel Noddings is born
1939 World War II breaks out
1943 Howard Gardner is born
1945 World War II ends
1952 Maria Montessori dies
1946 Loris Malaguzzi is born
1970 Margaret McMillan is born
1861 Rudolf Steiner is born and the American Civil War begins
1865 President Lincoln is assassinated
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1888 Jack the Ripper begins his serial murders in London
1896 Piaget and Vygotsky are born and Bridget Driscoll becomes the first person in the world to be killed in a motor accident in London
1904 Burrhus Skinner is born
1914 World War I breaks out
1915 Jerome Bruner is born
1917 Urie Bronfenbrenner is born and Russian revolution takes place, with the Czar of Russia and his family being executed
1918 World War I ends and Spanish Flu breaks out, killing 50 to 100 million people
1920 Loris Malaguzzi born
1921 Reuven Feuerstein is born
1925 Albert Bandura is born
1929 Nel Noddings is born
1939 World War II breaks out
1943 Howard Gardner is born
1945 World War II ends
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1946 Loris Malaguzzi is born
1970 Margaret McMillan is born
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1945 World War II ends
1952 Maria Montessori dies
1946 Loris Malaguzzi begins working as a teacher
1996 Te Whāriki commences
two decades, been quite substantial with courses now being run for practitioners who wish to specialize in this area (see the following link, which offers a comprehensive overview of the nature of Forest Schools: www.forestschoolassociation.org/forest-school-myth-busting, accessed 31.07.17).

ACTIVITIES AND POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Activity: View the following website, The Nottinghamshire Children & Families Partnership: www.surestart.notts.nhs.uk – and identify the key factors that local authorities must take into account when supporting young children and their families.

Discussion: Consider why so many very young children growing up in the 21st century and their families still need high levels of support when this was recognized by theorists and philosophers such as Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi generations ago.

EXTENDED AND RECOMMENDED READING


Additional information can be found on the following website relating to children’s social development and learning, ‘Early Years: The organisation for young children’: www.early-years.org/surestart

REFERENCES


