

Calum is a 6-year-old boy who lives in a small town on the west coast of Scotland. He shares his home with his older sister, mum, dad, a lovely dog, and two cats. Calum has a big personality and has a love for adventure. He enjoys playing with his collection of toys, especially his planes and tractors, which he often imagines zooming across vast, make-believe landscapes. He takes great pleasure in teasing his older sister, while also making her laugh with his playful antics.

When he's not running around the house, he can be found outside, zooming around on his scooter or kicking a ball about with his dad, who's always ready for a game of football or catch. Calum's enthusiasm doesn't stop, he attends a boxing club, where he's learning to punch and jab with precision. At home, his dog is his best friend, and the two spend hours playing together with Calum giving his dog all sorts of commands and pretending they are on an important mission.

When it comes to winding down after a busy day playing, Calum is a fan of cartoons, especially Mr. Bean on Netflix and Alvin and the Chipmunks, which make him laugh every time. He started at an outdoor nursery, where he has spent his days exploring nature and learning through play, and now he's settled into primary one, making new friends and learning new things in a school setting. Through all his adventures, Calum is always surrounded by the love and support of his close-knit family, who enjoy every moment of his curious, energetic nature.

Physical development in early learning refers to the growth and maturation of a child's body and motor skills. This includes both gross motor skills, which involve large movements like running, jumping, and climbing, and fine motor skills, which involve smaller movements such as writing, drawing, and manipulating objects. During early childhood, children experience rapid physical growth and improve their coordination and balance through play and physical activities. (Meggitt, 2012)

This development is essential for their overall health and well-being, as it promotes physical fitness, encourages exploration, and fosters independence as they learn to navigate their environment. By the age of 6 Calum is able to control major muscles and he has good balance which is crucial for playing on his scooter and he likes to do things like jump, hop and skip.

Cognitive development in early learning refers to the process through which children acquire knowledge, think critically, and develop problem-solving skills. During this stage, young children engage in activities that stimulate their curiosity and

imagination, helping them to explore concepts such as numbers, shapes, and language. They learn to focus their attention, remember information, and make connections between ideas. (Meggitt, 2012)

This development is essential for their academic success and overall understanding of the world around them. Through play, exploration, and guided learning experiences, Calum will build the cognitive skills necessary for lifelong learning and intellectual growth. For example, when Calum plays on his scooter he is working out how to make it move and how to make it stop. By the age of 6 Calum is able to tell the difference between two objects and identify fantasy from reality.

Physical development and cognitive development are interrelated for a 6 year old as each influences the other. As children improve their coordination through activities like running and jumping, they also improve their problem solving and thinking skills. For example when Calum is playing games that require strategy not only will boost his physical abilities but also gets him thinking about decision making and what he can do next. For example when Calum and his dad play football at the local football field he needs to think of what to do next and create strategies so he will be able to win against his dad.

Environmental resources play an important role in influencing a 6 year olds development during play. Since Calum likes to play on his scooter, access to safe outdoor spaces is crucial. Calum lives in a flat so garden spaces are very limited so his dad takes him out along the shore road to play on his scooter. Outdoor spaces allow children to engage in physical activities that increase their gross motor skills, coordination and overall health. Environments such as parks and gardens encourage creativity, exploring and strengthen cognitive development as children interact with their surroundings and learn about nature and the world around them. While environmental resources play an important role there are also potential downsides, Limited access to safe play areas can set back physical development, leading to lack of exercise and outdoor exploring. Environments that are overly structured or lack variety may interfere with creativity and imaginative play.

Economic influences could affect play for Calum in various ways. Families with limited financial resources may struggle to provide access to toys, educational materials or after school activities that promote healthy play and development. This can lead to fewer opportunities for physical activities which are crucial for Calums

growth. Families with more stability can afford a wider range of educational resources, toys, days out and after school activities which can increase Calums play experiences and overall development. Calum comes from a good income family so he does have good access to toys, educational materials, days out exploring the world around him and after school activities.

Familial factors can greatly impact Calums development through play. When his mum and dad are actively involved in playtime it strengthens bonds, enhances social skills and creativity. A supportive family environment that values play provides more opportunities for imaginative and physical activities. But if a family prioritises academics too much or has a stressful atmosphere it can limit play time preventing important learning experiences. The family's attitude towards play, whether they see it as essential or not, also shapes how children engage with play and other children.

Tina Bruce's theory of development highlights the importance of play in early childhood education. It is when children are given the opportunity to play without any restrictions or adult interference. This allows them to explore their own interests and create their own rules. It informs current practice by encouraging educators to create play rich environments where kids can explore, imagine and learn. Tina Bruce's theory supports the idea that play contributes to a child's emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development. Calum plays with his sister using his imaginative play to imagine scenarios in his head to create fun games and role plays e.g. Using other equipment to act as something else while imagining a scenario in his head like cops and robbers, restaurants, and school roleplays. This means imagining the perspective of a person in a certain role and a specific situation. (Bates, 2019)

Jean Piagets theory of cognitive development highlights the importance of children being active participants in their own learning. Piaget believes that children are not passive recipients of information but instead they actively explore and interact with their surroundings and that engaging with surroundings is crucial because it allows them to gradually build an understanding of the world. Since Calum was in an outdoor nursery he was around natural environments that offered him opportunities for sensory experiences such as sounds, textures, and sights. For example he would explore soil and water through his play and actively learn about the world

around him and how he can help care for the local environment which is expanding his knowledge and understanding. (Bates, 2019)

Piaget's theory looks at cognitive development. He emphasized the stages children go through as they grow, how children build knowledge and understanding and how they build awareness of the world around them but Tina Bruce's theory looks at play and childhood education, her theory explains how the idea of play is an important factor to children learning and development and how it helps support children's skills building and understanding on the world around them through experiences.

Bruce's theory stated that play is the central factor of a child's learning process, she stated that children learn through active involvement through a number of different types of play and that these are a fundamental part of a child's development. Piaget also viewed play as an important factor of a child's development but his theory mainly looked at the child's cognitive abilities at different ages and stages of their lives.

There are a number of pros and cons of both Piaget and Bruce's theory, some of the pros are Bruce's theory focus on play and the vital role it had on child development. Bruce's theory also looks at the holistic approach and how that helps with the aspects of a child's development. Bruce's theory also looks at how to create an environment full and modified to meet an individual child's needs. Piaget theory looks at how children are the main providers of their knowledge and looks at child-centered learning and how they play with their environment. His theory changed the way teachers think about teaching and how they provide learning experiences to children.

There are also a number of cons about Bruce and Piaget theories, one of the main cons of Bruce's approach is how play-based learning can sometimes not always meet the needs of a child's academic needs and how play may only lead to specific development being expanded e.g cognitive and physical. Piaget theory cons are that he mainly focuses on cognitive development and doesn't factor in the roles of culture and social factors that may also help develop a child's learning.

The Eatwell Guide is a valuable tool provided by the government to help people make informed decisions about their food and drink choices, ensuring they adopt healthy eating patterns. It offers guidance on the right proportions of different food groups to include in daily meals, promoting a balanced and nutritious diet. By following these recommendations, parents and carers can ensure that their children are receiving the essential nutrients required for their growth, development, and overall well-being.

The guide divides foods into five key sections: fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates (such as bread, rice, and pasta), proteins (like meat, fish, eggs, and beans), dairy (including milk, cheese, and yogurt), and oils and spreads. Each section represents a specific group of foods that provide important nutrients. A well-rounded diet, based on these guidelines, helps maintain energy levels, supports physical activity, and promotes healthy development, especially in growing children. A healthy diet ensures he has the right nutrients for his body to grow, build strength, and maintain a strong immune system. At school, Calum benefits from having a nutritious and well-balanced meal during lunch, which supports his concentration and focus throughout the day. By eating meals that follow the Eatwell Guide, he is better equipped to absorb the information he learns, stay energized, and actively participate in classroom activities. Moreover, these healthy eating habits will have long-term positive effects on his growth, academic success, and overall quality of life.

The wellbeing wheel has eight sections from SHANARRI these are:

**Safe:** Children should be protected from harm, abuse, and neglect. This includes being safe from any form of physical or emotional harm, and being in environments where they feel secure.

**Healthy:** Children should have access to the physical and mental healthcare they need. This involves good physical health, proper nutrition, and emotional wellbeing.

**Achieving:** Children should be supported in their learning and development, both academically and personally. This includes doing well in school, developing skills, and feeling competent and confident.

**Nurtured:** Children need to feel cared for and loved. They should have a supportive, nurturing environment at home and in other aspects of their lives, such as school or childcare.

**Active:** Children should be encouraged to engage in physical activities that promote their physical and mental health, such as sports, exercise, and outdoor play.

**Respected:** Children should be treated with respect and dignity. Their views, feelings, and opinions should be listened to and valued, and they should be involved in decisions that affect them.

**Responsible:** Children should be supported in taking responsibility for their own actions and behaviors, learning to be accountable and contributing positively to society.

**Included:** Children should have equal access to opportunities, services, and support, regardless of their background or circumstances. This ensures they feel they belong and are not excluded.

The SHANARRI wheel has a positive outcome for children which is having a good start to life. (SHANARRI) For example the active part in SHANARRI means having the opportunities to be involved in activities such as playing and sports. These activities help with healthy growth and development whether being in school or at home. Callum likes to play sports with his dad so being active playing football gives him opportunities to promote his growth and physical development, Calum also takes part in boxing and keeping active in the playground with his friends and while he is out on adventures with his family

Voluntary sectors refer to organizations that work towards social, community, or charitable goals rather than making a profit. These organizations typically rely on donations, grants, and volunteers to carry out their missions. Examples include groups like Cubs, Rainbows, Brownie Guides, and Scouts. The voluntary sector plays a vital role in personal development, especially in areas such as sports, where they provide valuable programs to young people. For example, Calum's involvement in a boxing club, which is run by volunteers, offers numerous benefits for his growth.

The voluntary sector contributes to Calum's development by promoting physical fitness through regular exercise, which not only helps him build strength and improve his coordination but also develops healthy habits that can last a lifetime. Boxing teaches Calum how to follow rules, offering him a sense of discipline and

structure. In addition to physical benefits, boxing can help build emotional and mental strength. The supportive environment in a voluntary setting, where volunteers provide guidance and encouragement, can significantly boost Calum's self-confidence. Achieving personal goals in boxing, whether it's mastering a technique or winning a match, gives him a sense of accomplishment and motivates him to set and reach new goals. The praise and recognition he receives within the boxing club further enhance his self-esteem, helping him grow as both an athlete and a person.

The statutory sector refers to government organizations and agencies that offer public services funded by taxpayers. These services include areas such as education, healthcare, and public safety. The primary objective of the statutory sector is to serve the public and ensure that everyone has access to essential services. In terms of education, the statutory sector supports Calum's development by providing a structured environment where children can acquire fundamental skills like reading, writing, and more. School also offers children the opportunity to interact with their peers, helping them develop social skills like sharing and cooperation. Additionally, schools teach valuable life skills, encouraging children to express themselves and understand both their own emotions and those of others.

Primary school teachers play an important role in children's learning development. Teachers are responsible for planning and preparing activities, lessons and materials. They provide positive and safe environments which are crucial for young children. It's very important that teachers have a good relationship with students as it can result in better behaviour, improved confidence and self esteem and it will make the child feel more comfortable in the teacher's care. Teachers should also have a positive relationship with their pupils' parents as they will be communicating daily on how the child's day was and if they have noticed any changes in the child's behaviour, it also gives the parent more confidence when discussing anything with the teacher if they have a positive relationship with the teacher.

Boxing provides a safe environment for children to step out of their comfort zones and try new things. Boxing helps children build self-confidence and emotional regulation. It can serve as an outlet for excess energy or frustration, allowing kids to channel their emotions in a productive way. The structured environment of a boxing club provides a sense of stability and teaches respect for themselves, their peers, and authority figures. By engaging in boxing, children can develop discipline, focus,

and perseverance. They also learn the importance of hard work, resilience in the face of challenges, and the ability to set and achieve goals.

The partnership between a teacher and a boxing instructor for a 6 year old can be very effective. This collaboration supports holistic development by combining academic learning with physical fitness, helping children grow both mentally and physically. It allows for the integration of skills, where lessons on teamwork and discipline in school can be reinforced through boxing. Activities keep children engaged and motivated, making learning enjoyable. Partnership working can provide practitioners with new opportunities for learning.

In conclusion I have found that the development of a 6-year-old child like Calum is shaped by a multitude of factors, from physical and cognitive growth to the impact of environmental, economic, and familial influences. The theories of Piaget and Bruce highlight the crucial role of play in cognitive development and supporting children's learning experiences. For Calum, engaging in play with his family and peers, as well as participating in activities like boxing, not only promotes physical fitness but also enhances his emotional and social skills.

The availability of safe and stimulating environments, as well as access to resources such as a supportive family, a balanced diet based on the EatWell Guide, and a nurturing educational setting, are essential for his overall well-being. The SHANARRI wellbeing wheel emphasizes the importance of ensuring children's safety, health, and active participation in life, all of which contribute to their holistic development.

Ultimately, by combining theoretical insights and practical resources, Calum is provided with opportunities for growth that foster independence, critical thinking, and well-being. The collaboration between the voluntary, statutory, and educational help ensure that his physical, cognitive, and emotional development is supported in a well-rounded, enriching way. This integrated approach to learning and development will help Calum grow into a confident, well-rounded individual, equipped with the skills and resilience needed for future challenges he may face.

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