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Part 1 -

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: SimplyPsychology 2025



The diagram shows a pyramid with five levels. From bottom to top: 1. Physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest) - labeled as 'Basic needs'. 2. Safety needs (security, safety). 3. Belongingness and love needs (intimate relationships, friends) - labeled as 'Psychological needs'. 4. Esteem needs (prestige and feeling of accomplishment). 5. Self-actualization (achieving one's full potential, including creative activities) - labeled as 'Self-fulfillment needs'.

In Holzknicht's (2007) video explaining Maslow's Hierarchy of needs it is stated that Safety is another important factor as it provides structure. Maslow argued that it gives physical security, protection and stability. When these are met people feel stress free without any concerns. Without a sense of safety people often feel stressed or down which then takes up a lot of emotional and mental energy which can make a person feel drained.

According to Poston (2009) Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is an essential tool to use in different professions, more likely education and healthcare. Poston (2009) suggests that the pyramid needs to be followed in order, as the body needs to determine the basic needs of the child/young person before moving on to the more complex needs of the individual so that they can have the best possible development in life. Poston (2009) states that Maslow's Hierarchy of needs was made by him observing and studying monkey's. After observing and studying monkey's he later transitioned his ideas to human behaviour where he then developed the pyramid of needs.

According to Holzknicht (2007) Maslow's Hierarchy is an holistic concept of children and young people's personality that their cognition, behaviour, emotion and motivation will centre around whichever the most unmet need is. He suggests that Maslow stated that the most urgent need that is not met will be the one at the bottom of the pyramid's hierarchy. Furthermore, looking at the pyramid Holzknicht (2007) suggests that the Physiological needs need to be met in order to survive and move up the pyramid. Children, and young people need food, water warmth and rest for them to develop. Without these basic needs they cannot function.

Burleson and Thorton (2014) states that once the physiological needs and safety needs are met, the next step Love and belonging become important. They suggest that a sense of belonging can be developed through clubs such as football, tennis etc, volunteering, commitments etc. They state that when people feel in need of love and belonging, they strive for a place in a group, they look for that connection in others. Without connections people feel lonely which causes mental health to suffer longterm. They state that once a person feels a sense of love and belonging they feel content and develop confidence. They suggest that Maslow stated that you cannot move on and up the hierarchy until the love and belonging needs have been fully met. Feeling a sense of love and belonging develops the emotional needs to create, grow and reach the individuals full potential in life Burleson, Thorton (2014).

Burleson and Thorton (2014) suggest that love and belongingness and self-esteem come into one, as children and young people or adults have needs to feel cared for and loved. They suggest that children and young people seek these fulfillments from their teachers. Burleson and Thorton (2014) state that teachers must make the most of every opportunity to reinforce a child/young person's positive behaviour which will help their self-esteem. They suggest in future, this will help the learner as they will develop positive self-esteem which will also help develop their self-image. Moving on after the third tier in Maslow's Hierarchy, children/young people move up to Self-esteem, which includes confidence, achievement, respect of others, the need to be unique. Again, Burleson and Thorton (2014) suggests that self-esteem is often split into two groups..

At first a child/young person will want to develop confidence, strength, achievement and adequacy in life. Next, a child/young person will want to develop prestige, reputation, appreciation, recognition, and importance. They suggest that when both these groups are met, children/young people feel a sense of worth, capability, strength and belonging. However, Burleson and Thorton (2014) states that if these are not met this will knock their confidence and self-esteem and make them feel weak, which furthermore will put a halt in the process of them moving forward to the higher tier of the hierarchy. Poston (2009) states that the meaning of self-actualization as defined by Maslow is a single component of being within the hierarchy, this is an independent need. He suggests that self-actualization is an internal dialogue to which every person develops at some stage in life. Poston (2009) states that when a child/young person feels, unsafe, hungry or unloved, it becomes a main priority to try and resolve these issues. Self-actualization is there to pinpoint how a person really feels about something, at times this can be difficult as it is challenging to figure out what is bothering them, this determines how connected they are with their abilities and their self. Furthermore Poston (2019) states that when a person is focused on self-actualization it defines who they are as a person. Once a person develops self-respect, the person can then take a proactive approach to self-improvement and being able to keep a focused mindset on resolving any issues that arise. When this happens a person will become satisfied with who they are, which comes with a sense of peace in life..

In conclusion, Poston (2019) believes that every person is a self-actualizer. Sometimes it is experienced at different points in life, whether that is at a young age or a little bit later in life. He states that everyone is emotionally affected by Maslow's Hierarchy. If a child/young person has positive life experiences, and their needs and development are being met, that person will then thrive in self-confidence and self-esteem at a faster pace. Furthermore Poston (2019) states that the person will develop a stronger set of coping mechanisms when one of their tier stages are not being met. Looking at a different perspective Poston (2019) sees what negative life experiences do to a child. This means that when a child's needs are not met, their self-esteem and self-confidence will be affected, in the long run the child will be seeking approval from their family, peers or teachers and could then develop a fear of making mistakes in the future.

Part 2 -

According to Brodie (2018) a holistic child development is where all areas of learning, growth and development come together with each other. Brodie (2018) believes that holistic development defines as, from birth, the child's learning, development and growth are interdependent where the child/young person will rely on a peer or trusted adult for support, and Brodie (2018) suggests that children and young people are also concurrent which defines as something that could happen at the same time.

Parenta (2021) states that a holistic approach in teaching and learning looks at connections in the natural world. They state that holistic development in the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) helps children to connect with the environment that surrounds them, it helps them to learn, explore and discover in their own way. Furthermore Parenta (2021) writes that the focus of holistic development is on a child's personal, social, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being, Parenta (2021) believes that these are all linked to a holistic approach in the development of children. When doing assessments by considering a holistic approach of a child's development and progress it will always be in a form of observations, which will link into the EYFS according to Parenta (2021). They state that one of the advantages to a child's holistic development in EYFS is that it will allow a practitioner/teacher to take an activity that the child enjoys such as Maths and turn it into an activity where the child can learn. This will help the child/young person develop one or more aspects in the holistic approach which will help their overall development, well-being and learning. According to Parenta (2018) holistic development allows children and young people to learn and explore new subjects as it encourages curiosity, allowing them to develop creatively and naturally. It allows them to develop their social and communication skills, which builds their confidence, this will enable a positive experience within that certain activity.

The children and families act (2014) states that children and young people with additional learning needs have the right to achieve well in their school/setting, including practitioners or teachers using the holistic approach to allow the child/young person to thrive and develop but being more mindful that they do not just focus on one academic area of the activity as a child could have more than one learning difficulty, for example autism. A child with autism could have sensory issues therefore need to

be more mindful of how to meet the child's needs positively in the best and efficient way Parenta (2014). Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child UNRC (2019) states that every child with additional learning needs have the right to support to life an independent life.

Gambrel and Cianci (2003) states that Maslow's hierarchy of needs in order are, physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization. They suggest that people seek to satisfy their physiological needs. These are basic human rights required to keep a child/young person safe and well, which includes the right to food, clothing and shelter. The UNRC (2019) will follow up on Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as every child needs each step of the pyramid to be able to develop and thrive in life.

When looking at a holistic child development and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, they are quite similar in ways as a holistic development is there to allow children/young people to learn and explore Parenta (2018) and Maslow's Hierarchy, Gambrel and Cianci (2003) writes that physiological, safety, love/belonging, and self-esteem must be met before a child can reach their full potential. However, Maslow's Hierarchy is a step-by-step guide with how a child progresses throughout life and how every child needs to meet the hierarchy of needs to progress in life. A holistic approach is more assessments and observations and how after observing we can help the child thrive by identifying what needs to be worked on. According to Shah (2025) making sure activities using the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs enables teachers/practitioners to create a holistic approach into the environment of learning as they both support a child's learning and well-being enabling them to want to learn new things which will help their personal growth.

According to Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead (2008) transitions are vital to a child's well-being and experiences. They suggest that in a practice, transitions come across in different ways, for example, vertical and horizontal. They state that vertical transitions are changes from one to the other such as from nursery to reception. For example, in my workplace it could be when a child comes to breakfast club and that transition from breakfast club to outside, or to the classroom. Further on, Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead (2008) state that horizontal transitions are less obvious than vertical ones as they happen on a day-to-day basis. They look at the movements of

the children, for example, everyday movement from home to school or a nursery setting. For example, in my workplace it could be that a change in daily routine has happened such as an outside person coming in to teach a lesson.

Music (2011) describes the definition of Attachment as how different kinds of parental sensitivity give children different reactions which then forms different kinds of attachment to with others. To build on this Fearon and Roisman (2017) believe that attachment is a key topic in the parent child relationships. They state that Bowlby's theory refers to children who look for contact with a consistent parent/carer when they feel frightened, sad or worried. That attachment can help the child feel secure and safe, which leads back to what was said about Maslow where a child needs to feel safe and secure to survive. Transitions and Attachment are vital as they provide safe zones for them to learn and experience new things. It allows children to navigate and develop relationships when Maslow's basic needs are met. They introduce a sense of belonging in the world, a secure attachment with parent/carer can have a positive impact on the child's hierarchy through life.

Part 3 -

I will be using Gibb's reflective model to reflect on my experiences.

Child A has support from myself as he has specific needs. Child A enjoys coming into breakfast club after working on this since September. At the time with trying to transition child A outside, I felt quite frustrated as child A gets quite angry when asked to go outside in the mornings. On the other hand, it felt quite sad as the child could not communicate why he did not want to go outside, I had 'I hate it'. Before, Child A hated breakfast club, now it works very well, I ensure that the child has a notebook and a black pen, his toast is cut into triangles and that the child sits by friends. This helps child A transition smoothly into breakfast club and drawing in his notebook helps to regulate every morning. At 8:35am when breakfast club is ending, the now and next comes into place to try and help child A with a positive transition from indoors to outdoors. Ouvry (2020) states that playing and being outside is important, as it gives children vitamin c, stronger immune systems, better bone development and increases their physical activity. As going outside is a vital part of the child's routine, we have tried his notebook and pen, small toy cars and blanket to

help. I noticed that our positivity rocket which is part of our school policy. I used now and next to reinforce the positive behaviour 'Outside now, rocket next', child A took my hand and guided me outside and had asked myself to stay there. After getting into the yard, child A went off and started to interact with friends. In conclusion, I have learnt the rocket helped the child A to transition from breakfast club to outdoors. To change in the future, I will ensure that a comfort toy of the child's choice is always taken with them, and to ensure that the class teacher or I is outside to help and support child A transition outside. I will also ensure that all members of staff are aware of child A's needs to ensure that if I was not there, how to help if child A is struggling to transition. If the situation arose again, I would use the now and next and use the rocket to help and support. Our policy states that the rocket is there to encourage positive behaviour that ensures that the children and young people have the best learning and teaching (YGG Cwmnedd no date).

Child B is currently struggling with food and is very fussy and finds it difficult to eat big meals. To ensure child B hits the physiological needs on the triangle, we must make sure that child B is eating something every day. Child A finds it difficult to eat at breakfast club and dinner times. At the time child B worked themselves up and began to cry because they did not want food, which was difficult to watch. To ensure that child B the child eats both at home and school, we communicate with parents to encourage trying new food and use positive language to help the child, and to ensure the child is getting the nutrition. We have the same rewards as home and parents communicate with us by sending letters. We have noticed that child B enjoys showing us what is in their lunchbox, therefore it has become a routine for the child to show us at 11:30am every day what is in there. This has a positive impact on child B, as the child is feeling proud of what is in their lunch box and what they are about to eat. The negative impact of this is that the child has become reliant on myself and members of staff. An analysis shows traits of the child and what foods they are having and what we could work on trying in the future. Action plan for this situation would be to continue to observe the child to see what food they are having, have the parents check for any medical or possibly dietary needs just to make sure, note patterns down such as what they eat, how long it takes and their sensory reactions to the food.

My last experience is children starting a new class. Children starting a new class and experience, some can feel happy whilst others will find it difficult to leave their primary caregiver. Some children could find it difficult as they could have social difficulties, making new friends, knowing they must share toys and turn take. Myself as a teaching assistant felt quite nervous to welcome a new class, will they enjoy lessons? Have we put out enough opportunities, so they do not get bored. Children's first day went well, they enjoyed the sensory tuff tray and enjoyed and outdoor play. According to Artis (2025) play with the teacher is important for a child as it encourages a child to explore and experiment, and to experience life around them. It is important for their social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth. Next time a new class begins, I will analyse the children more closely to help identify the child's needs, likes and dislikes and what we can do to support them individually. I have learnt that routines are important in everyday life, friendships with others and a positive relationship with practitioners can have a positive impact on the child to move up Maslow's Hierarchy.

To conclude, with experiences like this happening it is important to recognise our emotions and feelings as working with children/young people comes with an important responsibility for example, their development and general wellbeing. At times I feel quite frustrated with myself when things do not go to plan, to me this shows my commitment to ensure that these children thrive in life. On the other hand, there's a sense of proudness, seeing these children/young people develop and thrive in the school setting, show's that I am making a positive impact.

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