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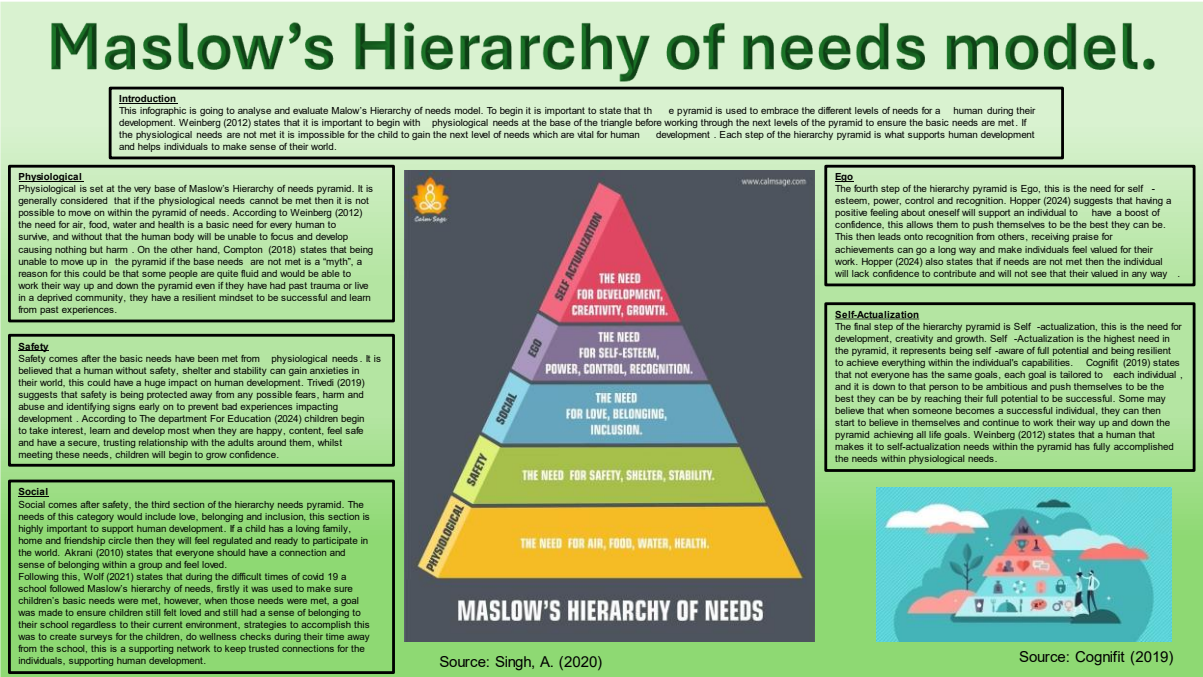
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Human Development Portfolio

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Word count:992

The concept of holistic child development

This essay will focus closely on the concept of holistic child development, it is necessary here to begin by clarifying exactly what is meant by 'Holistic Development', according to Brodie (2018) this term used means working with something or someone as a whole. Holistic development focuses on an individual's physical, social, emotional, intellectual and mental wellbeing. It is important to add, when working with an individual they are their very own person, this meaning they have their own interests, strengths and weaknesses and will develop in their own time with the support from the adults in their lives. The Welsh Government (2008) states that for a child to reach their full potential and develop holistically they will need an adult in their life that can guide them and enable opportunities and experiences.

It is well known that holistic development begins from birth right the way through the individual's life, this brings me onto the importance of holistic development in early years. Birthto5Matters (2021) states that children have open opportunities to create new experiences every day, that may be daily routines such as snack/lunch time or playing in the playground, these daily activities enable them to learn, grow and understand their world, whilst supporting the holistic development of the child. Some may agree that the child's development will vary depending on their early-stage relationships and experience. Ham (2017) states a child is completely reliant on their adults from birth until they develop the skills to become independent, if the child feels safe with their adult and gets the responsive, sensitive and consistent approach then they will develop a secure attachment to their caregiver, this then leads onto the child being happy, engaging and eager to explore the world. Secure attachment sets the child up to a positive start academically but also gain confidence to be successful whilst knowing their caregiver is there if any negative experiences occur. However, Birthto5matters (no date) states that it is important to understand, the professional's that support the child's development have a duty of care and that includes keeping the caregiver's up to date on any changes and keeping a trusted relationship, this sets a good example to the child and enables them to develop trusted adults so if they are ever in doubt they know they have support whether that be at home or in public to ease transition anxieties for them.

Fabian (2009) suggests that Maslow's Hierarchy of needs pyramid is a good starting point to support holistic development, meeting the physiological needs before being able to progress through the pyramid, but also concentrating on the child holistically will help the adults in the child's life to recognise what skills are needed to enhance their development for success. However, another theorist called Bronfenbrenner also uses a similar strategy to Maslow, Bronfenbrenner's base of his model focuses on the environment of the child, ensuring that they have a solid family, a home, childcare and healthcare before working their way through the further needs, this is very similar to Maslow's base ensuring the needs are met for air, food, water and

health before progressing. Both Maslow and Bronfenbrenner's models are a working progress to become self-actualized whilst always keeping the child at the centre. It is crucial to add, some children may struggle to follow these models due to their disadvantaged start in life. Bowlby (1982) states that children will display signs if they have a positive relationship with their caregiver, they can be unsettled and cry for a while as that adult is their safe person, this emphasises that it is important for the professional's to build the trusting relationship with the child to make the transitions slightly easier for them.

It is generally considered that there are some issues that may block holistic development, these issues can begin right from the start or during a child's development journey. NSPCC Learning (no date) states that a child's development is scaffolded by their wellbeing, if a child has past trauma from abuse or neglect, poor mental health due to the environment they are being brought up in or broken relationships then this can affect their development significantly. Following this, it is important to always be alert and recognise the negative signs a child may display so the adults supporting the child can respond accordingly to help prevent any further affects to the child's development and mental health. Another issue that may affect the child's development is attachment and transition, some children may find this a tricky phase during their early years and may display negative behavioural signs in result of this. There are many types of attachment a child may have to a caregiver, some sharing similar signs, however, if a child is quiet, withdrawn and has negative emotions then this could be because they have an avoidant, anxious/ambivalent or disorganised attachment with their caregiver and this may be why they are not developing as they should.

Finally, many professionals may use Maslow's theory during their practice and find it useful to help identify where the issues may be blocking the child from developing. The professional will then be able to recognise and implement what changes need to be made in order for the child to begin their development journey. On the other hand, some practitioner's may already know the child and have an understanding on the child's home environment and early-stage relationships with their caregiver's so they opt out from using the model because they may think it will not work for the individual as it will knock their confidence by not being able to meet the needs to enable them to be successful. The Welsh Government (2014) state that wherever the child may be learning and developing the care and education sector will ensure the child will holistically develop to their fullest, this supports the basic needs within Maslow's model and may promote use of the model within educational settings.

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Malow's significance in understanding child development.

This essay will shed light on Maslow's significance in understanding child development, including examples from Early Years practice and how the adults support the children through their time of development. It will focus on the child's wellbeing and their needs but also the importance of the adult being the enabler for the child's success and experiences. Throughout this essay we will understand how the child's wellbeing and their environment plays a significant part in their holistic development and how professionals recognise the behaviours within Early Years practice.

It is generally considered that transition can be an unsettling and challenging time for both children and their adults. Birthto5matters (2021) states that transition is not just between buildings, it is also moving between rooms in the same setting, daily routines such as going for lunch and playtime, this is known as horizontal transition. Vogler et al. (2008) states that there is also a transition called vertical, this is a time where a child will be moving upwards in life, whether that be nursery or moving onto secondary school, this can be a daunting time and can cause many anxieties for the child. Another type of transition is education-associated transition, this is events that has happened within the child's life that could affect their education and development, examples for this is a family bereavement, parental relationship breakdown or a negative change within the child's life. EYGuidance1 (2020) states that many children may experience transition issues which can have an impact on their well-being it is then the early years professional's role to help to support the child during the difficult time. When a child is due to move onto their new year-group in school, new classroom, new teachers and possibly new friends this can be a anxious time for them. The anxiety the child is feeling may cause school avoidance, if this occurs it can become a concerning time as it can have a detrimental impact on the child's development. Strategies to support the child through transition can include; a transition booklet, a transition day so the child could explore their new classroom, meet the new teachers and peers. Resources such as a 'now and next board' to help the child to understand what is coming next, some fidgets and a safe space for the child to regulate. Some may agree that Maslow's theory links to transition because transition requires the child's needs being met before becoming self-actualized within a new environment.

Next it important to add that many may believe attachment is a big factor within a child's development. NSPCC Learning (2021) states that attachment is a psychological connection between two humans, in this instance relating to the child and their caregiver. It is important to explain that there are different types of attachment, according to Early Years TV (no date) a secure attachment is a positive attachment, however, the child may become distressed when they part ways with their caregiver but is confident to engage with others, explores new environments and feels secure. The caregivers are usually responsive, sensitive and consistent

when the child has a secure attachment, this supports the child to reach their full potential. On the other hand, there are some negative attachment types that share similar signs, these are; Ambivalent, avoidant and disorganised attachments, the child may display negative behaviours, they may be withdrawn, quiet, angry and depressed, this will then have a negative impact on their holistic development. The caregiver's may be inconsistent, neglectful, distant, disengaged and sometimes passive/extreme. According to Fearon (2011) children are highly affected when they have a poor relationship with their mother because they are suffering with post-natal depression, the mother may become insecure about the care they provide the child, and this can cause them to develop a disorganised attachment to the child. Kirklees Council (no date) states that the caregiver's are the child's key person that provides them with confidence. A child experiencing a disorganised attachment may display signs within the setting, they may have no interest and refuse to participate in activities, they may show negative behaviours, this could be physical or verbal and this will again have a poor effect on their holistic and academic development. Practitioners working with the child may offer well-being sessions, follow an ELSA intervention programme, they may also offer a relationship-based play session and invite the caregiver into setting. Care Learning (2024) states that Maslow states that children need secure and responsive attachments to allow development.

Finally, It is believed that safety is one of the basic needs within Maslow's model, when a child has their safety needs met then they are enabled to develop holistically and develop an ambitious and resilient attitude towards learning. According to Sage Journals (2022) a child is unable to participate and interact in their environment if they do not feel safe or a sense of belonging, this will then cause the child to develop anxieties diverting them away from learning, building new relationships and having opportunities to explore new environments. A child can feel unsafe if they have been through a traumatic experience with abuse during their childhood, this may affect them significantly when developing holistically and during their academic studies as they are most likely to struggle with trusting adults around them. According to Department for Education (2024) each setting has a designated safeguarding officer, it is the practitioner's role to inform them of any signs of harm to keep the child safe and happy. If the child has experienced past trauma the practitioners can help to support the child by providing well-being sessions, creating safe spaces, having regular check ins and use sensory circuits to support regulation. It is also important for the child to have trusted adults within their environment so if they wish to disclose any information then they can do so by speaking to the practitioner.

To conclude, Maslow is significant to Early Years practice because he focuses on a child as a whole, he models that their basic needs need to be met before they become a confident, successful individual. Maslow shows the importance of the adults being the enabler for the child during their development, it's the adult's role to enable new environments and experiences and creates a strong, positive well-being for the child.

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