

Contents page

Page 1 – Contents page

Page 2 – AI Guidance

Page 3 – Part 1: Infographic: Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Pages 4-6 – The Concept of Holistic Child Development
Introduction, Relationships, Safety, Wellbeing and conclusion

Pages 7-9 – Maslow's significance in understanding child development
Introduction, Understanding the importance of basic needs, Creating a safe and stable environment, The transitions journey and conclusion

Pages 10 & 11– Reference List

AI Guidance

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Part 1: Infographic: Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

What is Maslow's Hierarchy of needs?

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology. The pyramid shape shows the hierarchical levels of human needs. Maslow originally identified in order to fulfil a human's top-level needs (self-actualization), a person's basic needs of food and water need to be met first. However, Maslow (1943) later admitted his earlier idea of each level's needs needing to be met before moving to the next level gave 'the false impression that a need must be 100% satisfied before the next level of needs emerge' (Maslow, 1987, pg.69)

What does it look like for a child?

Maslow's theory challenges Early Years practitioners to consider a child's emotional, social, physical well-being alongside their cognitive development. This offers a child a holistic approach, this is an approach that looks at the child as a whole.. In order to meet the needs of a child in an Early Years setting, Maslow's ideas translate into strategies for a safe, supportive learning environment: encourage curiosity and creativity; develop positive relationships and a child's self-esteem and address challenging behaviour.

Self-Actualization:

'Maslow (1943,1987, p.64) describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, and to become everything one is capable of becoming'. When a person has achieved self-actualization, they are fulfilled and have done all they are capable of. According to Kenrick et al. (2010) each individual is unique and the motivation for self-actualization leads people in different directions. Self-Actualized people are accepting of others as they have a sense of purpose and are self-aware of themselves. They enjoy learning and reap the benefits of self-growth. This can sometimes be seen by their personal characteristics and sense of independence in situations.

Self Esteem:

Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories that include dignity, achievement, mastery and independence and a child's status and prestige. This involves the desire for respect. This need reflects a person's desire to be accepted and valued by others. Self-esteem is the way we think and feel about oneself. An essential part of having good self-esteem is feeling loved, supported and trusted by their parent or carer. (youngminds.org.uk). As an Early Years Practitioner, we can support a child's self-esteem by providing a hug, if a child requires one, spend time helping a child talk about themselves and what they do well and ask a child if they are okay. If a child does not develop good self-esteem, low self-esteem can develop after stressful or upsetting experiences. These could include being called 'naughty', being criticised for making mistakes or being put under pressure to succeed.

Love and acceptance/belonging:

Examples of love and belonging include friendship, family, trust, acceptance, and receiving and giving affection and love. Maslow identifies the need and involve feelings on belongingness. According to Kathy Brodie the need for love and belonging is particularly strong in childhood and can override the need for safety. (earlyyears.tv) This need is crucial in developing social skills and forming relationships with peers, parents and carers. Another theorist who looked at the relationships of a child and prime carer is John Bowlby. He developed a theory of attachment. The Welsh Government produced a document with parenting tips to ensure a child receives love and affection. 'If you have a warm, loving and affectionate relationship with your child it will help them feel safe and secure.' When a child's safety, security and love needs are met its 'more likely a child will be happy and confident, and able to handle conflicts and anger'. (gov.wales)

Safety/Security:

Maslow identifies the need for safety and security as an individual's need for protection from physical harm, emotional well-being, financial security and overall health. Montessori theory has also identified the safety and security needs of children as similar to Maslow. In her book 'The Secret of Childhood' she relates to studies and observations she has carried out to identify if a child's needs have been met but observing a child's reaction to an umbrella being placed in the room and a child and their parents' response. Montessori's theory and Maslow's theory also link when looking at the 'predictable, organized world' and a 'prepared environment' playing a role in the fulfilment of safety. They identify the needs for a child's adult to provide comfort as a priority. Maslow also identifies the need to feel safe can be as dominant and obsessive as the need for food. For Early Years provisions, safety needs relate to creating a secure and predictable environment for children to explore and learn.

Physical/Physiological needs:

According to Maslow's pyramid he identifies the physical and physiological needs as air, water, food shelter, sleep, clothing and reproduction. For a child to have these needs met they require support from an adult (parent/carer). As a baby their most basic need for survival is eating. It is well documented in Welsh Government guidelines about the impact of a healthy diet and improved sleeping pattern. 'The Healthy Child Wales programme' supports children, families and Early Years provisions to ensure a child's basic needs are being met. (Welsh Government, 2024). Both eating and sleeping are necessary for survival. The need for warmth, clothing and shelter also contributes to a person's physical and physiological needs. Without these basic needs being met, a person may not be able to move to the next set of needs. Although Maslow has identified the pyramid are not steps to which a person moves on in order, he does identify that the human body cannot function optimally if a person's physiological needs are not satisfied. Once these needs have been met the need for security and safety become salient.

Conclusion

Despite the fact we are looking at Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, there are other theorists that share and challenge Maslow's theory. As previous mentioned, Maslow's hierarchy of needs does not follow a strict linear progression. A person can feel various needs at the same time or shift between the levels of needs. Abraham Maslow identified his hierarchy of needs in 1943, then continued to refine the theory over several decades (1943, 1962 & 1987).

The Concept of Holistic Child Development

Introduction

A concept is an idea or abstract principle according to Collins dictionary. The idea of holistic child development is where all areas of learning and development intricately intertwine and children develop and learn holistically. (David *et al.*, 2003. Pg 76). The term holistic means dealing with something, even if the whole can be subdivided into smaller groups. In Early Years practice, holistic development means that, from birth, the learning, growth and development of young children are interdependent and concurrent. Holistic development can be identified as being born in the 18th or 19th century. According to a journal by Lydia Scaltsas in Edinburgh, German educator Friedrich Froebel most likely identified holistic development by allowing children to learn and create styles using their own initiative (<https://lydias-tuition.co.uk/what-is-holistic-development/>). When considering holistic development in relation to providing a service to a child is it important to consider the United Nations Convention of the rights of a Child (UNCRC) The rights are of equal importance to every child and consists of 54 articles. Articles 31 (relax and play), Article 13 (freedom of expression), Article 28 (an education), Article 27 (sufficient standard of living) and Article 24 (health and health services) are paramount in a child's holistic development.

Relationships

When understanding the concept of holistic child development, it is vital to consider positive relationships. A positive relationship is built when a child develops an attachment with an adult. This attachment develops when a child feels a sense of respect from a trusted adult. This could be shown by the adult being attentive when being spoken to, listening to what has been said and responding appropriately in a respectful and caring manner. Urie Bronfenbrenner's theories highlight the role of relationships in a child's development. Within his theory and the microsystem, he identifies the requirement of a parent – child relationship to be nurturing, responsive and supportive; practitioner – child relationship to be a positive caring relationship and peer relationships to provide opportunities for social learning, cooperation and developing social skills. Abraham Maslow's theory and Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory correlate together in relation to developing relationships. When working within the Early Years, settings where practitioners have the most influence to build self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience provide a positive influence on babies and young children (Brodie, 2018). Similarly to Bronfenbrenner, John Bowlby's theory of attachment identifies 'that all children need a stable and secure relationship with at least one caregiver for healthy socioemotional development'. He believed there are two styles of attachment – secure and insecure. Hostettler Schärer, J (2018). In connection with Mary Ainsworth, Bowlby developed the theory of attachment further. After researching with Bowlby, Ainsworth developed an

assessment technique called 'Strange Situation Classification' (SCS) to investigate how attachments may vary between children. She then identified three main styles, secure, insecure and avoidant, which became four styles after later identifying disorganized as an attachment style. 'Ainsworth's (1971, 1978) results provided the first empirical evidence for Bowlby's (1969) theory of internal working models of attachment relationships. (Ainsworth, *et al.*, 1978)

Safety

Along with developing positive relationships and attachments to ensure a child's needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs are being met, a child's safety needs to be considered. The concept of safety is providing an environment or service which prevents harm. In practice this is an environment where any potential risks are minimised. It is an environment that promotes physical and emotional well-being and ensures that a child's needs are being met. Ensuring a safe environment is created requires constant monitoring and adaptations for the changing needs and abilities of the children to develop. Vygotsky (1934) believed 'that community plays a central role in the process of making meaning'. A child's behaviour will often show if they feel safe and secure in their environment. Behaviour is often referred to as a form of communication. Young Children will communicate in this way due their brain still developing and they may not have the words to communicate verbally. Dr Dan Siegel has a visual prompt called the 'hand model of the brain'. This prompt offers an understanding of the emotions a child may be feeling. The model offers a representation of the thumb as the 'downstairs brain'. This part cares about protecting and keeping safe and oversees one's big emotions and the fingers of the hand represents the 'upstairs brain'. The part is responsible for problem solving, logic and reasoning. When a child 'flips their lid' they're connections between upstairs and downstairs brain may not be developed. They would require an adult to assist them to regulate and understand these emotions. (Welsh Government 2)

Well-being

Well-being is a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. According to the Welsh Government 'Well-being and Childhood Well-Being in particular, are widely used concepts but have a weak theoretical basis.' (Welsh Government 1). When considering well-being in childhood it is multi-dimensional meaning that it includes dimensions of physical, emotional and social well-being. This should focus on a child's immediate life but also consider their future to provide a holistic approach. According to UNICEF (2007), they compared data on a child's well-being, of children in poverty and children in 'rich' countries. The report was disregarded due to a number of limitations on the data including, bias towards information on older children; data not disaggregated by child characteristics such as age, sex and ethnicity and key information being unavailable in some countries. (UNICEF, 2007). According to Lydia Scaltsas's

guide for Nursery's and School's in Edinburgh, wellbeing is part of a child's intellectual and emotional development. She refers to it as spiritual wellbeing, this is not religious but relates to where a child feels their place within the world. This concept may seem too much for a child to understand however, childhood is where a child experiences fundamental thoughts and reasonings and where their experiences develop their future.

Conclusion

In this chapter the concepts of holistic development have been identified in the view of Abraham Maslow and other theorists who have developed theories that relate to a child's holistic development.

Maslow's significance in understanding child development

Introduction

In this part of the portfolio there will be an exploration of three examples from Early Years practice to highlight Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. The examples will show the significance of understanding the links between Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and the examples. The three examples in this portfolio will be 'Understanding the importance of basic needs', 'Creating a safe and stable environment', and 'the transition journey'.

The following paragraphs will explain the three examples of Early Years Practice that highlight Maslow's Hierarchy of needs.

1. Understanding the importance of basic needs

Maslow's work has highlighted the understanding of child development. When providing a holistic approach, it emphasises the importance of understanding a child's basic needs before expecting a child to engage in learning activities.

As an Early Years practitioner when welcoming a child into a new environment there is a need to be open and receptive to ensure the child's needs can be identified. Physiological needs are the first and foremost needs of a child. They include food, water, fresh air and rest. It is good practice within a setting's continuous provision to have a 'healthy snack and water station' to allow children to access snacks and water away from preoccupations about being thirsty or hungry. Also, within a setting's continuous provision it is recommended to allow children to move freely indoors and outdoors, this meets a child's need for fresh air and exercise. There is a need for quiet spaces within a setting too. An example of a quiet space within a preschool setting is a reading corner that has walls to create the quiet space with multiple sized cushions and blankets to help a child regulate themselves when they need rest or sleep. Unfortunately, the absence of any of the above can mean that a child may become stressed easily. This may cause connections to inhibit a child's thinking and learning. Adults also experience this, think how difficult it can be to concentrate if you are tired or hungry! By providing a high-quality early year's environment where the adults are fully involved and engaged in a child's learning and development, this will enable a child's physiological needs to be met. (EarlyYears.tv). If a child's lower-level needs are not being met, they may display unwanted behaviours or struggle to concentrate, this could come across as being wilfully disobedient. Understanding and considering the underlying needs that drive behaviours is part of the role. 'Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development focuses on how children actively construct their understanding of the world in different stages'. (McLeod,2024). Piaget's stages and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs have some alignment, for example, both theorists suggest that development

occurs in a specific order with the earlier stages forming the foundation and children being 'active learners.'. Piaget emphasises this and it aligns with Maslow's concept of self-actualisation allowing individuals to reach their full potential. However, both theorists have their own concept of cognitive and universal stages. Piaget's theory highlights cognitive development. However, Maslow's encompasses the range of human needs and an individual's needs being based on cultural factors

2. Creating a safe and stable environment.

At the next level of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is the need for safety and a sense of belonging. Whilst in an early year's provision children need to feel emotionally safe and secure to be able to explore and develop their learning. As an Early Years Practitioner, it is good practice to develop these connections from the start. Opportunities to observe children and develop connections by providing 'favourite things', involving children in labelling resources to encourage independence and involving children in decisions about their learning environment assist the growth of connections. By using the child's ideas can provide them with a sense of safety and will enable a child to start to recognise their own needs for thinking and learning. As an Early Years Practitioner there is a need to understand a child's deficiency and growth needs as this can also help to create environments that not only meet children's basic needs but enhance the possibility for a child to growth and reach self-actualisation. Many schools in Wales have a 'Breakfast Club' to ensure a child's physiological needs are being met at the start of the day. When they enter their learning environment, they can access learning and inclusive education. Addressing and managing challenging behaviour is part of an Early Years Practitioner's role. A child may be seeking attention if their belonging need is not being met or they may feel insecure meaning their safety needs may not be met. Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasises the role of social interaction and culture in cognitive development. Both Vygotsky and Maslow recognise the importance of social relationships and Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding learning in a child's zone of proximal development supports Maslow's self-esteem and self-actualisation needs. However, Vygotsky's theory focuses on the role of culture to shape development whilst, Maslow's theory has been criticised for its Western cultural bias. In practice is often consider using Vygotsky's ideas to inform social learning opportunities whilst Maslow's theory is used to ensure a child's basic needs are met by creating a supportive social learning environment. (Clarke, n.d.)

3. The Transition Journey

A child will experience many transitions throughout their life. Examples of such transitions a child may experience are primary caregiver to day nursery, day nursey to preschool, preschool to primary school (in which there is a transition every year to a new class), primary school to secondary school and secondary school to an individual's choice of life experience (college,

university or work). Transitions are a movement from one experience to another. In relation to early years transitions it is important to ensure the child is always considered as meeting their needs is paramount. Bronfenbrenner (in Brooker, 2018) describes the importance of two-way communication. As an Early Years Practitioner, it is important to develop a relationship with a child's caregiver and the child to ensure the child experiences smooth transitions into a setting. Having this relationship with the caregiver will also provide a practitioner with essential information about the child and provide opportunities for the practitioner to provide the caregiver information on how the child has been in the setting. With the developing relationship and two-way communication caregivers and practitioners can follow the child's routines and provide a sense of belonging to the child. This relationship also alters as the child progresses through transitions in relation to the settings professionals, the caregiver should also be considered as part of the 'team'. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs fosters the development of relationships and providing a sense of belonging by providing an enriched environment, professionals understanding the need of meeting a child's needs and providing training opportunities to allow professionals to enhance and develop their own knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs offers a recognition of children being holistic beings with diverse and interconnecting needs. When considering Maslow's theory, it is important to remain flexible and adapt your practice accordingly to maintain the addressing of a child's fundamental needs. By being thoughtful when applying Maslow's ideas, Early Years Practitioners can create rich, supportive environments that allow children's growth, learning and self-actualisation.

Reference List

Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation. Hilldale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Brodie, K. Early Years TV (earlyyears.tv) (accessed 24/11/24)

Brodie, Kathy. (2018). The Holistic Care and Development of Children from Birth to Three: An Essential guide for Students and Practitioners, Taylor & Francis Group:
Communityplaythings.co.uk (accessed 24/11/24)

David, T., Gooch, K., Powell, s. and Abbott, L. (2003). Birth to Three Matters: a Review of literature Compiled to Inform the Framework to Support Children in their Earliest Years. London: DfES

<https://helpchildrenlivebetter.co.uk/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/> (accessed on 24/11/24)

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com> (accessed on 24/11/24)

<https://EarlyYears.Tv> (accessed on 24/11/24)

<https://www.gov.wales/free-breakfast-primary-schools> (accessed on 1/12/24)

<https://lydias-tuition.co.uk/what-is-holistic-development/> (accessed on 1/12/24)

<https://www.nurseryandschoolguide.co.uk/post/what-is-holistic-development-and-why-is-it-the-best-approach-for-educating-our-children#:~:text=Holistic%20development%20focuses%20on%20nurturing,not%20just%20their%20academic%20understanding.> (accessed on 1/12/24)

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> (accessed on 1/12/24)

Janine Hostettler Schärer (2018). How educators define their roles: building 'professional' relationships with children and parents during transitions to childcare: a case study, European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 26:2, 246-257
DOI:10.1080/1350293X.2018.1442041

Kenrick, D. T., Neuberg, S. L., Griskevicius, V., Becker, D. V., & Schaller, M. (2010). [Goal-driven cognition and functional behavior: The fundamental-motives framework](#). *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19 (1), 63-67.

Maslow, A.H (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd Edition). Delhi, India: Pearson Education

Maslow is cited in *Sustaining Shared Thinking* by Jenni Clarke (Featherstone Education)
<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/content/features/enabling-environments-continuous-provision-part-3-level-best/> (accessed on 29/11/24)

McLeod, S. (2024, January 24). *Piaget's Sensorimotor Stage of Cognitive Development*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/sensorimotor.html> (accessed on 29/11/24)

UNICEF (2007). *Child Poverty in perspective: an overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Innocenti Report Card, Vol 7. Florence, Italy.

Weinberg, D.R *Montessori Life* 2011-12 Montessori, Maslow, and Self-Actualization.

Welsh Government (gov.wales) *An overview of the Healthy Child Wales programme* published 26th September 2016, updated 11th April 2024.

Welsh Government 1: <https://www.gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/tips-for-guiding-childrens-behaviour/make-time-for-love-and-affection> (accessed on 24/11/24)

Welsh Government 2: *Understanding and responding to Children's Behaviour in the Early Years*

Young minds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>