

Cover Sheet

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ECGE4001: Human development

For this assignment I have submitted the following:

Component 1 – Develop an infographic to explore Maslow’s model in depth.

Word Count: 1,000

Component 2 – Explore in depth the concept of holistic child development with links to Maslow’s model Word Count: 1,020

Component 3 - Offer three examples from early years practice to highlight Maslow’s significance in understanding child development. Word Count: 1,004

Total word count 3,024

I used A.I

To ask what headings to put into a academic case study.

Component 1

Introduction

Abraham Maslow was born in 1908 in Brooklyn New York. He studied psychology at the University of Wisconsin. Johnston (2018). King-Hill 2015 explains “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (HON) is a developmental psychology theory proposed by Maslow (1943).” She goes on to explain that Maslow’s needs are in a specific order of importance according to Maslow, these are psychological, safety, belonging/love, self-esteem and self-actualisation but she also points out, although we use a pyramid which I have used here, within Maslow’s writing he did not use this as a representation to his hierarchy. In this infographic I will explore each need in depth.



(Mcleod 2025)

Physiological

Maslow (1943) calls Physiological needs the most prepotent, he feels this takes priority over all other needs. He explains that someone who is starving, will not have care for safety, love and self-esteem as they would want food more than everything else. Furthermore, if all the needs are unsatisfied, the physiological need is dominated, and the rest of the needs become non-existent. King-Hill (2015) in her journal Critical analysis of Maslow’s hierarchy of need also explains the importance of physiological. She explains learning will be non-existent if a child does not meet their physiological needs, they will not be able to focus on their education, if they are being deprived of food and water. They will be in survival mode. An example she shares is about the room in the setting being too cold, students will concentrate on how they are feeling hoping for warmth instead of on their learning. Maslow’s idea is that a person basic needs are met before they can feel anything else. Article 24 UNCRC (1989) I have the right to be healthy supports this.

Safety

Maslow (1943) argues “If the physiological needs are relatively well grafted, there then merges a new set of needs, which we may categorise roughly as the safety needs”. He explains that just as the physiological, the hungry man thinks everything else seems less important than safety. Maslow believes that the needs of an infant or child can be more simple or obvious. He goes onto to explain, that infants will react if they hear a loud noise or anything rough handling, but an adult who may not feel safe, may not see it on the outside. Maslow (1943) continues to say although they may have a fear of losing the love of their parent, rejected children will cling to their rejected parent to feel safety and protection rather than for their love. King-Hill (2015) emphasises “security of body, family, property and morality” she explains these are examples of physical safeties. Maslow’s idea of safety is about security and into today’s practice this is embedded into policies, such as safeguarding and having trusted adults around children for example childcare practitioners who are DBS checked, The UNCRC (1989) article 19 helps implement this idea too. I have the right not to be hurt.

Love/Belonging

Maslow (1943) argues, "If both physiological and safety needs are fairly well grafted, then love, affection, and belongingness needs will emerge." He adds, Love needs to involve both giving and receiving to work. He also explains that a person will feel the absence of friends, spouse, or children and will seek affection to compensate for this. If not, the individual may feel rejected or isolated. Maslow (1943) stresses that Sex is a physiological need, as shown by studies. King-Hill (2015) explains that this need involves intimacy and friendships. Maslow's idea of love and belonging emphasises the importance of friendships, family, and belonging to a group. Today, his idea aligns with the ALN Framework for Wales Welsh Government, (2021), which supports an inclusive education system for all children. The Welsh curriculum for funded non-maintained settings (Welsh Government, 2022a) and the framework for early childhood play, learning, and care (Welsh Government, 2022b) support developmental pathways, belonging, and wellbeing, addressing Maslow's need for love and belonging.

Self esteem

Maslow (1943) argues that nearly all people in society need self-respect or self-esteem. People have a desire for strength, achievement, and confidence, as well as independence and freedom. He explains that the satisfaction of self-esteem helps us feel worthy and have self-confidence, and have the strength, capability, and adequacy to feel useful in the world. Maslow (1943) concludes that esteem or respect from others is also important for society. He says that stopping this need would mean people will develop lower feelings, feel weak and helpless. Maslow's idea of self-esteem is embedded into our practice today, ensuring as enabling adults we are helping our children to feel valued, respected and listened to. This helps to build their confidence and self-esteem and supports their sense of identity and belonging. (Welsh Government(2022a).

Self-actualisation

Maslow (1943) introduces "self-actualization needs" explaining this only appears when the more basic needs are "relatively grafted". Different people express this for example one person may want to be an ideal parent, another may want to be a high achiever in a sport or have the desire to paint or be creative. Maslow (1493) quotes "The clear emergence of these needs rests upon prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love and esteem needs."

Maslow's idea of self-actualisation in today's early years can be found in the curriculum for funded non maintained settings, through creating "Ambitious, capable learners, enterprising, creative contributors, ethical, informed citizens and healthy, confident individuals" (Welsh Government 2022a) the enabling adult allows the child to flourish through their play imagination and friendships.

Conclusion KING-Hill (2015) suggests that Maslow describes the three bottom needs of the pyramid as "deficiency needs" she feels that if these three areas are not met this can have an impact on a person's physiological and psychological consequence. From researching Maslow's hierarchy, she believes that to reach self- actualisation all other needs will need to be fulfilled. This hierarchy develops a holistic approach, Practitioners who ensure all these needs are being met are helping to create children who are reaching self-actualisation through embedding a holistic approach within our settings.

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Component 2

Holistic development, also known as the child-centred approach, can be found being discussed in literature today and throughout the past. It is embedded in current practice and influenced by key theorists such as Maslow (1943), Froebel (1837), and Montessori (1907). Currently, the non-maintained sector and Flying Start are following the framework set out by the Welsh Government (2022a,b). The framework is *A Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Settings* and *A Quality Framework for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales*.

The Welsh Government (2022a) has also created a curriculum for practitioners who work as childminders, teachers in schools, teaching assistants and headteachers. This framework plays a key role in creating a holistic approach to learning; however, for this to work, practitioners will need to embed the whole curriculum into their practice. This will mean ensuring key areas link and that the child is always at the centre of all practice. Planning should reflect observation, seize the season and plan key events to offer authentic interactions. The curriculum recognises that every child is unique. Between 0–5 years, development is rapid, and the document highlights the role of the enabling adult, the experiences, a place to become creative, and an enriched environment that offers high-end resources to enhance child development. Creating real-life play experiences and observing meaningfully, which are then analysed, will create responsive planning or key information for a child's assessments. This is all fundamental to helping to shape a holistic child development approach. The developmental pathways provide opportunities for authentic and purposeful learning environments, helping children develop skills across all five of the different pathways, which are communication, exploration, physical, wellbeing and belonging. These have also been created for children who are 0–3 years old, in *The Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care: Developmental Pathways 0 to 3* (Welsh Government, 2022b).

These ideas that have been developed for the curriculum (Welsh Government 2022a) were shaped by theorists' work who continue to inform practice today. In the 19th century, Fredrick Froebel (1837) created the first preschool, which he called a Kindergarten. Froebel believed children grow naturally through play and action, and they learn through engaging experiences and exploring what he called "gifts." These

gifts are now resources that are used today. For example, the unit blocks that are played with by children today were gifts 3–6. When Froebel first had these ideas, they were called radical, but after his death, his ideas started to become recognised widely. He influenced kindergartens in Western Europe, in America and then worldwide. Froebel's principles are now embedded in current practice (Johnston, 2018). One of his principles is 'play as central development.' This is reflected in the Curriculum (Welsh Government 2022), which explains that children begin to explore a range of emotions and learn exciting new things whilst playing and creating playful experiences. Play covers so much of a child's development; they learn to persevere and collaborate, which affects a child's confidence and independence. While Froebel emphasised play as central to development, other theorists introduced contrasting perspectives, such as Montessori's focus on independence.

In the 20th century, Maria Montessori (1907) developed the Montessori method. She believed children were individually unique and should be sheltered from adverse influences, including excessive adult intervention. Montessori saw children as explorers and manipulators, with adults observing and supporting rather than directing. She advocated for child-sized furniture and environments that foster independence and holistic growth (Johnston, 2018). Montessori's holistic approach is poignant throughout the curriculum. She emphasises independence and observation. The curriculum states that practitioners should have knowledge and understanding of child development. They should carefully observe a child's interests and fascinations, whether they have schematic play, and support the child to develop independence and resilience (Johnston 2018). Both theorists are based on a child, whilst psychological theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs offer another framework for understanding holistic development.

Maslow (1943) was also part of the 20th century. He created a hierarchy of needs consisting of five stages: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation. Although he wrote about these stages in a specific order, Maslow acknowledged that you may not always start with physiological; it would depend on how individuals prioritise these needs. His model is reflected in the Curriculum (Welsh Government 2022a) and early years developmental pathways. Highlighted is that children need to feel safe, secure and valued, and their wellbeing should be at

the centre of everything we do. This will give the child the ability to learn and develop (Welsh Government, 2022a). This reflects Maslow's bottom needs: physiological, belonging and safety. High-quality interactions between the enabling adult and the child, with the adult supporting engaging experiences and providing effective environments, are fundamental to a child making progress (Welsh Government, 2022a). This reflects Maslow's hierarchy of needs, esteem and self-actualisation.

Lindon (2012) highlights in her book that children naturally have a holistic way of learning. They do not focus on just one area of development. When a child is being observed, you can see and hear the children using a few different areas of development. For example, when creating a den, they will be using their communication to communicate with each other and use their physical movement to find and move materials, and problem-solve. This helps create connections which are meaningful. Although Lindon demonstrates holistic development, this may not work for all children. Some children may display social anxiety, and children with additional learning needs may want to play more solitarily. The way we now observe the child has evolved from when Lindon drafted her book.

Although holistic development is not a new concept and has been around for centuries and influenced by theorists such as Maslow (1943), Froebel (1837) and Montessori (1907), whose ideas are reflected in today's practice, this has evolved. Wales has introduced the *Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure* (2011), which ensures children's rights are embedded into practice today. The Curriculum (Welsh Government 2022a) ensures that practitioners are meeting every child's individual need by ensuring observation is part of everyday practice, to find out the child's likes and dislikes, their fascinations and if they are displaying schematic play.

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Component 3

Example 1: Transition in early years highlighting Maslow's significance in understanding child development.

Description: Transitions are a key element to the early years. This may be daily challenges such as moving from room to garden or major challenges such as moving between home and setting (Welsh Government, 2022a). Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) highlights the impact transitions have on children. Children need to feel safe through trusted adults creating an emotionally safe environment. This develops a strong sense of wellbeing (Welsh Government 2022a) and a sense of belonging through offering emotional support, and esteem through confidence when settled. When these needs are met, children begin to be resilient and thrive in the environment. They will confidently separate from their caregiver to trusted adults. This shows Maslow's significance in early years practice today.

Scenario: Dewin Disglair Childcare, a Flying Start playgroup in Newport, supports 2–4-year-olds in a deprived area. Its transition policy reflects Maslow's hierarchy (1943). Families attend welcome meetings to share routines, cultural and dietary needs. Personalised settling-in sessions ensure safety, belonging, and esteem, helping children feel secure and confident (Newport City Council, 2025).

Analysis: When transitioning into a setting, a child's immediate need is safety, achieved through routine and a trusted adult that provides stability. This foundation allows belonging, as a child begins to form positive relationships with peers and practitioners, feeling welcome and warmth in the setting. (Welsh Government 2022a) Once settled, they begin to develop self-esteem through confidence and opportunities to explore independently. For example, personalised settling-in sessions at Dewin Disglair support safety by establishing routines, belonging by involving families throughout the process, and esteem by enabling the child to thrive. This approach reflects Maslow's hierarchy(1943) and promotes resilience in transition.

Conclusion: Transitions are essential in early years practice. Maslow's hierarchy (1943) highlights how meeting safety, belonging, and esteem needs allows the child to thrive during significant changes. The approach reflects the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery showing the importance of consistency and progression.

Supporting transition in this way builds resilience and promotes holistic development for future challenges across the learning journey. (Welsh Government (2022a)

Example 2: Attachment in early years highlighting Maslow's significance in understanding child development.

Description: Attachment in early years is fundamental to practice. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) highlights this through the safety and belonging tier. Positive attachment and feeling safe and secure when leaving their caregiver are important for children. Practitioners should use effective communication and positive interactions (Welsh Government, 2022a). Belonging is part of the developmental pathways, and attachment is crucial. From birth, a child seeks attachment; when loved and nurtured, they form a sense of belonging which shapes identity. (Welsh Government 2022b)

Scenario: In a flying start setting based in Newport , a child age 2 years finds leaving their caregiver challenging. The child is upset when arriving and sometimes holds the caregiver tightly. The key person has begun forming positive attachments, offering a trusted adult to support this transition. This helps the child understand the environment is safe and secure, enabling exploration.

Analysis: Bowlby (1969) highlights using the mother as the secure base to begin to explore, which is a positive attachment, while Maslow's hierarchy (1943) reinforces this, stating safety and belonging must be met before esteem. The key person offers comfort strategies and collaborates with the parent to implement them. This links to developmental pathways under belonging and wellbeing (Welsh Government, 2022a).

Conclusion: Attachment is essential in early years practice because it supports emotional security and development. Maslow's hierarchy (1943) highlights safety and belonging as essential tiers, showing that a child must feel safe and connected before progressing. Welsh Government (2022c) reinforces the importance of positive communication and interactions in nurturing secure attachments. From birth, a child seeks attachment; feeling loved and nurtured ensures belonging, identity, and resilience. In practice, a child struggling with separation demonstrates this need. The key person approach provides continuity and trust, helping the child feel safe and secure, enabling exploration and confidence in the environment.

Example 3: Play in early years highlighting Maslow's significance in understanding child development.

Description: Play is a fundamental part of child development; children need and drive to play. It helps them become aware of themselves and explore physical, cognitive, and social functional skills (Welsh Government 2022c). Children take play seriously, learning through perseverance. Play should be valued and observed closely to identify learning outcomes. (Welsh Government, 2022a) and Article 31 of the UNCRC (1989) highlight the child's right to play and relax.

Scenario: In Dewin Disglair Flying Start Newport, a three-year-old consistently engages in lining up objects, usually small world figures, bikes, and other equipment in the garden in precise order. The child becomes distressed and screeches if peers move or touch anything she has lined up. This play is repeated daily, helping her understand her environment and feel secure. Although not typical of a three-year-old, this child has ASD and is non-verbal. Staff intervene only on her terms, noticing and observing cues.

Analysis: The repeated lining-up demonstrates use of the positioning schema, where play focuses on arranging items in order. This schema provides predictability and control. Lining up toys is a coping mechanism, (Louis, 2013) allowing the child to feel safe and gain self-esteem, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy tiers of safety and esteem (Maslow, 1943). Distress when peers disrupt arrangements highlights the importance of this play for security and emotional regulation. Though solitary, it links to the belonging developmental pathway, as the child feels valued and recognises who they are, with trusted adults responding to interests (Welsh Government, 2022a). Practitioners play a critical role in ensuring the child can use their schema while extending it, meeting foundational needs and supporting progression through Maslow's hierarchy of need (1943).

Conclusion: Play can be structured, repeated daily, and show a schema, or cooperative with peers through conversation and turn-taking. Play is clear in the foundational stages of Maslow's hierarchy of need (1943). Practitioners should ensure environments meet physiological and safety needs first, then nurture belonging and esteem through a holistic approach.

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