

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

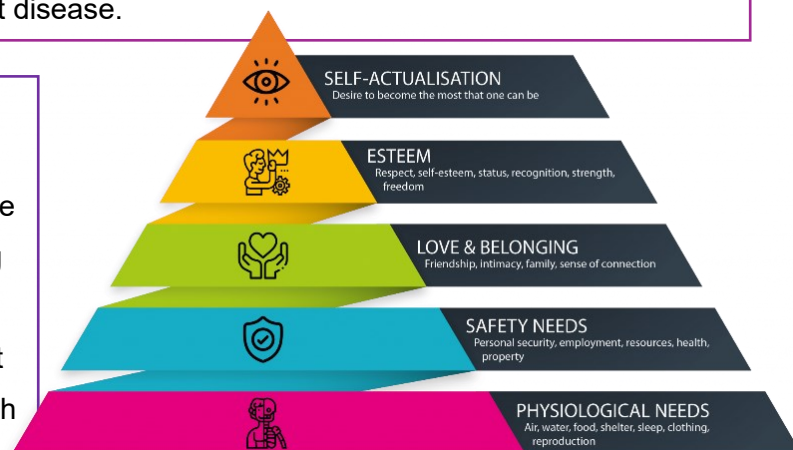
According to Abraham Maslow his pyramid model theory from 1943 aids in the development as a human and is effective if within the model structure a person moves up through each step, starting at the base first.

Physical and Physiological

Physical and Physiological needs being met are the essential base stage for a human's survival. For maintaining a healthy body physical needs include food, water, shelter, clothing and are necessities to being able to move up through the pyramid and progress in individual development. Physiological needs refer to a human's physical conditions including air, nutrition, sleep, health care and comfort. Meeting these needs first are important for development and growth including physical and cognitive as well as survival and health, ensuring that the human body can function properly with adequate nutrition maintaining overall health to prevent disease.

Safety and Security

Safety and Security needs include physical and emotional stability. Practitioners within early years educational settings should ensure they create a secure and safe environment that fosters emotional wellbeing with support systems in place to reduce feelings of isolation as well as support with transitions. The threat to not having safety and security for an individual is both physical and psychological.



[Maslows-Hierarchy-of-Needs-1.png \(2048x1209\)](#)

Love, Acceptance and Belonging

Love, including affection, belonging and emotional support contribute to a person's care, understanding and allowing empathy to be received from another individual or vice versa. Acceptance includes being valued and inclusion with positive interactions through relationships, family or community which can ensure a sense of belonging. These are vital for an individual's emotional health and social development.

Self-Esteem

An individual at this stage should desire for their own self-respect, confidence and independence. The person should have respect for others and respect for themselves. A person can develop self-esteem through creativity, achievements and appraisal when necessary, allowing the person to build self-confidence.

Self-Actualisation

For a person reaching the self-actualisation stage, according to Maslow (1943) one should be able to realise their own potential and personal growth. Maslow says they should be able to problem solve and lack prejudice as well as have confidence to believe they can achieve.

Exploring the concept of holistic child development with links to Maslow's model and other developmental theories.

Exploring the holistic development of a child enables the practitioner and other involved multidisciplinary teams to take into account the physical, emotional, mental and social aspects of the child's life completing a comprehensive evaluation method which can contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the child.

Abraham Maslow an American psychologist developed a theory known as 'Maslow's Hierarchy of needs' where specific needs would need to be met before a child was able to engage effectively progressing to the higher levels allowing the child to achieve growth and fulfillment. This framework proposes a pyramid of five levels, starting from the first step being physiological needs including food, water and shelter, to then gradually making their way up to the higher levels of the pyramid to needs including self esteem and self actualisation.

Then to be considered, other developmental theories such as Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (1940's) and Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development (1936) as these also provide an insight into the various dimensions of a child's holistic development. Erikson's theory emphasises the importance of social interactions and relationships in shaping a child's identity and self concept, while Piaget's theory focuses on cognitive processes and how children acquire knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

In the context of holistic child development, these theories serve as frameworks to guide and develop a practitioner's understanding of the diverse and interconnected nature of a child's growth. By recognising and addressing the various needs and stages of development that children go through practitioners are able to provide the necessary support and resources to facilitate their overall wellbeing and physical state.

Within practical settings such as education, holistic child development involves creating a stimulating environment that promotes physical health, emotional wellbeing, social skills and cognitive growth. A practitioner may include providing access to nutritious foods, safe and secure play within the teaching conditions, emotional support and guidance, opportunities for social interaction, this could include inviting the children's parent or guardian to events such as stay and play and educational resources to enhance cognitive development.

According to Belson, S. Heap, E. Snelling, A. (2008) following research into the role of health while learning, Benton (2008) provides an analysis of data in relation to diet and cognition within a child's development. It is recorded that *'macro (protein) and micronutrient (like zinc and iron) depletion is associated with behaviour problems and hyperactivity. Consuming*

nutrient-dense food instead of high-calorie, low nutrient food has been linked with positive academic results, while increased consumption of high calorie, low nutrient food has been linked with negative academic and behavioural results. (Burrows Goldman, Pursey, & Lim, 2017; Chan, Knight, & Nicholson, 2017; Fu, Cheng, Tu, & Pan, 2007;Purtell & Gershoff, 2015). A “Western diet” (high calorie, low nutrient-dense food) has been statistically linked to an increased risk of ADHD diagnosis (Howard, Robinson, Smith, Ambrosini, Piek, &Oddy,2011). Weaver-Hightower (2011) points out that greater attention to how food environments shape students’ educational experiences are needed (p. 18)’.

By adopting a holistic approach to a child’s development practitioners are able to ensure that the children are able to reach their full potential with their support, leading to a more fulfilling and meaningful educational life. This could be during a flying start placement to then progressing into early years education and care. Brodie (2018) says that within a fast changing environment the practitioners must ensure they are flexible, responsive and closely attuned with the children facilitated in their care. It is essential for parents, educators, policy makers and communities to prioritise holistic child development and invest in resources to support the growth and wellbeing of the children. Through the Welsh Government proposal *Building a brighter future: Early years education plan (2013)*, professionals are able to assess, track and monitor the development of a child’s progress in their early years. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and Estyn (2014) implement a joint framework which aids in developing improvements in the care, learning and wellbeing outcomes for the children. According to PACEY (2009) they are campaigning for a long term strategy to implement within early education and childcare to help understand the unique value of childminders as well as early years providers, putting them at the centre of addressing the unequal access that is currently leaving disadvantaged children, including those with an additional learning need, miss out due to lack of recourses.

Dr Gesell (1925) a clinical educator and psychologist introduced the maturational theory as a part of human development. In this theory Gesell emphasises the individual differences within a child as they develop including that he believed their genetics were a contributing factor to a child’s physical growth or developing additional learning needs rather than the child’s experiences and learning being a factor to their development. However, Jean Piaget (1936) developed a theory where she believed that the cognitive development of a child moves through four different phases rather than a child’s genetics. These include Sensory motor stage 0-2 years, preoperational stage 2-7 years, concrete operational stage 7-11 years and formal operational stage 11 years plus, allowing a child to develop their thinking and concepts. Another theorist known as Lev Vygotsky (1962) developed the social development theory which is similar to Piaget (1936) as they both believed that within a child’s development, they

could construct knowledge to obtain. Despite these theories and with some parts of them being similar, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory allows a person's development to grow through each of stages laying a foundation within the framework for practitioners to enable a child's motivation. Syomwene, Nabwire and Musamas (2015) explores the theories and how they are essential for early years curriculum development. Based on their findings they believe that through Gesell (1925) theory it is clear that an underline problem the child may have with the school curriculum would be due to the child and not the educator itself. It is important for the teacher's and practitioner's to always be patient with the children including the transition phases where the children may require additional support.

In conclusion it is important for practitioner's and early years educators to use Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as a guide to a child's development as well as taking into consideration the other theories of child development ensuring that they are able to obtain the correct knowledge and support throughout each stage. This will then allow a child to be able to climb Maslow's pyramid and reach their full potential.

Maslow's Significance in understanding child development.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) is a framework that is frequently used throughout a child and a human's holistic development. According to Zalenski, R. and Raspa, R. (2006) Maslow's theory is used throughout palliative and patient care, education and research. Understanding the importance of basic needs Maslow's theory is a starting point. Maslow first starts off with physical and physiological needs at the base of his pyramid. Andrews, D, says that there is a specific statutory duty upon local authorities to promote the educational achievement within children. Whilst using Maslow's theory as a guidance within early years education and care, parents would have already met the basic needs before their child is attending school but the parent leaving the child in the school's care would trust that with them as professionals and having a duty of care the teacher's or practitioner's should continue to assist their child's needs as and when required throughout the time spent with them. Lothian (2015) explored Maslow's theory and throughout his findings said that nutrition and especially within early years should be the 'upmost of importance'. This would be done firstly through offering food and water within the setting, whether it be allowing the children to attend breakfast club to ensure these needs were met before starting the educational day and allowing warmth through the environment for example, a child attended without being able to eat breakfast or a school cardigan and is feeling cold and hungry, the staff would then ensure the heating is on in the building and then offer a school cardigan or jumper from the ordered spare stock within the school as well as a snack to meet their nutritional needs to get them through until breaktime. Nutritional needs would then continue to be met as they

carry on throughout the day with lunches and drinks for hydration and fluid intake. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Welsh Government continued to allow schools to be open to ensure the children were still able to eat. It was said that *'after a month of local authorities providing free school meals to communities across Wales, and following a review into the possibility of adopting a national voucher scheme, the Education Minister said the way forward for Wales was for local authorities to decide what works best for their local communities'* (WG 2020)

The minister of education in Wales ensured that the children were still given their right to free school meals even during a world-wide pandemic. This was completed by parents collecting the meals, receiving vouchers for food or receiving a payment to allow them to be able to order their children food online. According to Noltemeyer, A. et al (2012) said that following a previous study carried out in America there was increasing concerns that children were attending school without having their physical and physiological needs met and a lot of the children lived in poverty. Without the government's offering support to meet these basic essential needs children would then be more at risk of malnutrition. The Welsh government proved to support children in Wales through their funding program during the Covid-19 pandemic and in connection with The Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations 2013, which details the standards in which schools provide nutrition.

Another significance Maslow (1945) created within his theory relating to a person's holistic development was safety and security. Creating a safe and stable environment for children within the early years is essential. A. Noltemeyer et al, points out that safety and security can have an impact on academic and cognitive achievement. A. Noltemeyer et al, maintains that it is not just environmental factors that influence a person's safety and security but also relates to a person's access to health and dental services available to the individual as well as safety services provided through safeguarding. The Student Practitioner in Early Childhood Studies (Twig 2020) says that *'Safeguarding and child protection training is available online through websites such as the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children and at this present time through local safeguarding partnerships as stated under the Children and Social Work Act 2017'*. Abraham (2021) says that research carried out by Brewin and Statham (2011) suggested that children who struggled with transitions were more likely to have an anxiety over doing this due previous trauma experiences and whilst conceptualising these factors through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of development the findings meant that no single transition approach could be relevant to all children as every child is different. Ansorger (2021) states that even teachers have been unable to transition since the Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions and using the example of

online learning to then be going back into a classroom, she said that some teachers found this a smooth process whilst others said this was stressful and challenging.

Through Maslow's theory and using this throughout early education and care it has become a significance to practitioners learning and understanding the overall development of a child. Brodie, K (2024) states that within a child's development as a holistic approach it allows and encourages the consideration of all development including physical, emotional, social and physiological needs. Brodie also says that through behaviour understanding practitioners within early years are then able to provide a framework to understand the expressions of a child's underlying needs as well as a developmental insight offering a perspective of how early experiences can have a long-term impact on learning and wellbeing. Brodie finalises with sharing that if a practitioner or professional is applying Maslow's hierarchy within an early years setting, then as professionals they can create more effective and child-centred learning experiences that will support their overall development and well-being allowing them to thrive in social and home environments.

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