2200017 ECEY4001

ECEY4001 – Portfolio

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I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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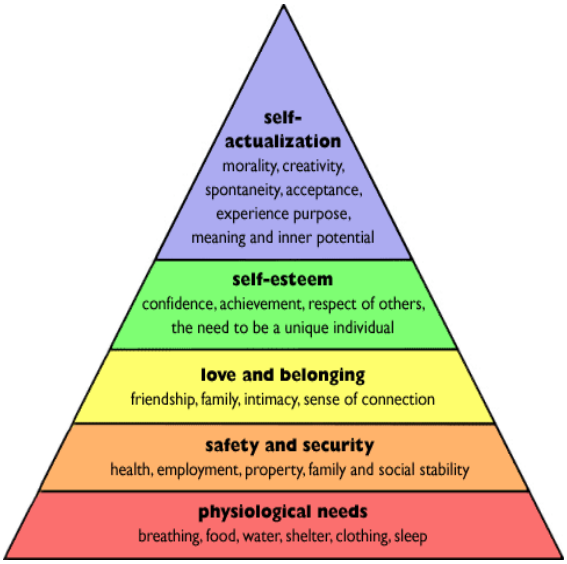
Part 1 - Develop an infographic to explore Maslow's model in depth

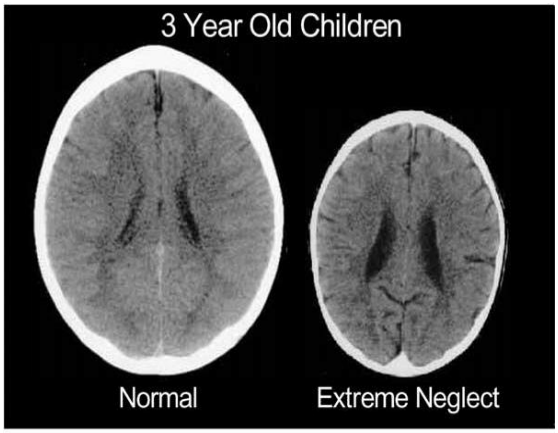
Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who studied at the University of Wisconsin, where he worked psychologists such as Harlow and Thorndike. His work with both led to him to consider social, physiological, and emotional needs and identified a hierarchy of needs which links to these areas. Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that each level needs to be fulfilled for development at the next level to take place. (Johnston *et al,* 2018).



(Source: Research History, 2012)

Physiological Needs

The first level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is physiological needs. For this level to be fulfilled, a child must be provided with air, food, water and health, the essential needs that a child requires to survive. Physiological needs are important as if they are not fulfilled, the child is then dominated by the physiological needs and all other needs become absent. (Maslow, 1943).



(Source: Perry, 2002)

Without adequate care, the child's development is affected. As shown in this image by Perry (2002), the three year old child's brain is severely underdeveloped due to the neglect they have suffered from. The brain of an infant develops through experience, and this provides the foundation for all future learning and behaviour (Harvard

University, 2015a). Therefore, if a child is not provided with these physiological needs that Maslow suggests, they are unable to develop, and all other needs become unreachable.

Safety Needs

After physiological needs are met, a new set of needs occur. This is the need for safety and stability. Safety needs are important as far too many children are being exposed to unnecessary risks.

Maslow (1943) states that violent relationships between caregivers are exceptionally terrifying to children, which leads to a lack of safety and stability. Additionally, Maslow (1943) suggests that threats of punishment directed at the child leads to panic and terror. This is supported by Brazelton and Greenspan (2001), who claims that there are increasing rates of abuse and neglect, in addition to prenatal and postnatal exposure to violence, which is compromising the safety of children. Another threat towards the child's need of safety is a disrupted routine. Young children thrive knowing there is a routine in place that they can count upon. Children want a predictable world and inconsistency from parents makes children feel anxious and unsafe (Maslow, 1943). Without these safety needs met, the further needs of the child are inaccessible.

Social Needs

After the previous needs are met, then the need for love, belonging and inclusion emerges. Maslow (1943) states that a child will have a great hunger for affectionate relationships and will strive with intensity to achieve this need for love. This can be shown in John Bowlby attachment theory. This theory focuses on the connection between caregivers and children and the impact of this relationship on development (Keenan *et al,* 2016). Bowlby says that there are four types of attachments. These are called secure, ambivalent, avoidant and disorganised attachment.

Bowlby states that a child needs a secure attachment for their needs to be met. The caregiver needs to be responsive and consistent for the child to be happy, secure and able to explore (Crowley, 2014). However, not all children receive this secure attachment. An example of a different type of attachment that a child can receive is disorganised attachment. The caregiver is chaotic, extreme and frightening. As a

result, the child is depressed, angry and unresponsive. The child is severely confused and has no way for their needs to be met. Harvard University (2015b) suggests that the lack of a secure attachment between an infant and caregiver can be a significant threat to the development of a child. Sensing danger triggers a child's biological stress response system, and extreme trigger can cause a dangerous effect on a child's developing brain circuitry. When this lack of receptiveness continues, the effects of stress can affect the development of a child associated with disorganised attachments.

Esteem Needs

The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is esteem. Maslow (1943) states that this is the desire for achievement, confidence and recognition. In addition to this, Maslow (1943) suggests that by hindering the need of self-esteem, it produces feelings of inferiority and helpless in the child, which can develop into neurotic trends. This is supported by Greenway and Hutchings (2022) who points out that there has been an extensive rise in emotional disorders amongst children from the age of 5 in the UK. This illustrates the importance of focusing on self-esteem from an early age and understanding its influence on child development.

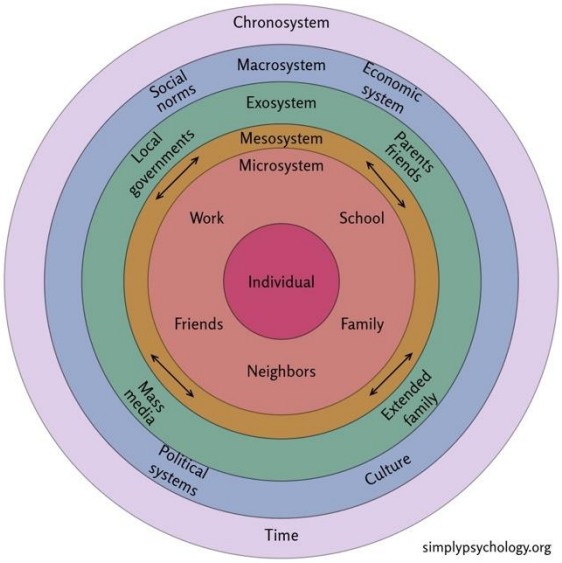
Play promotes physical health, which improves confidence and self-esteem. This is because the physical exertion associated with play release endorphins, increasing the dopamine levels in the brain. Dopamine is linked to motivation and the reward system. When children are rewarded with joy and pleasure through play, they feel good about themselves and feel confident that they can do anything, which motivates them to seek the rewards they get from playing, and therefore increases their self-esteem (Greenway and Hutchings 2022). With less opportunities for children to play, especially outdoors with others, children are becoming more deceptive to feelings of anxiety, depression and helplessness, thus giving them a lack of self-esteem (Gray 2011). Without these self-esteem needs met, the child is unable to develop and reach the higher needs in the hierarchy.

Self-Actualisation

The final level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is self-actualisation. According to Maslow (1943), self-actualisation refers to the desire of self-fulfilment, specifically, the desire to become actualised in what the individual has the potential to become.

Self-actualisation is important as it is a continuing process as we live in complex society. For children, self-actualisation means that if they have all their needs met, their esteem develops. This gives the child a purpose is life. Children learn that they are of value and have a place in our society.

Our actions as enabling adults have a positive impact on the world through the child. This can be shown through Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. This theory shows that a child is in an ever-expanding world which is being influenced by other systems. An early years practitioner fits into the microsystem. The practitioner is one of the first to influence a child, and as an enabling adult, gives the child esteem and purpose.



To conclude, Maslow's physiological, safety, social and esteem are all are important developmental needs which a child is required to reach for the goal of self-actualisation.

(Source: Simply Psychology, 2024)

Part 2 - Explore in depth the concept of holistic child development with links to Maslow's model.

This piece of work will be exploring the concepts of relationships, safety and self-esteem in relation to holistic child development. Holistic child development is where every area of development is entwined with every other. This means that right from birth, the development of children are interdependent (Brodie, 2018).

Relationships

To understand the concept of holistic child development, it is important to consider the relationships in a child's life. According to Maslow (1943), relationships refers to the need for love and belonging. John Bowlby created attachment theory in the 20th century, which focuses on the bonding, mainly between the mother and child, as well as the effect of this relationship on the development of a child. (Keenan *et al,* 2016). Bowlby suggested that children are pre-programmed from birth to develop attachments, typically with their mother (Wilson-Ali *et al*, 2019). In addition to this, Bowlby proposed that children develop a close attachment with secondary figures, such as practitioners. This secondary attachment provides children with security in the absence of their primary attachment figure (Wilson-Ali *et al,* 2019). Both types of attachments are important elements in how the child holistically develops. (McMahon and Dyer, 2018).

This can be shown in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The child is at the core of the theory and is surrounded by four systems. The microsystem includes the people that have direct contact with the child. This is the child's parents and teachers, who have the most influence on the child's life. The mesosystem is the system that surround the interactions between a child's microsystem, referring to the collaboration between early years practitioners and the parents of the child. The exosystem refers to the larger structures that a child does not participate in personally but has an influence on their development. This layer includes extended family, mass media and the government. The macrosystem is the general context of

the world that the child lives in. This includes political systems, social norms and cultural values. Finally, the chronosystem includes the time that the child lives in as well as the historical changes in the world (Sadownik, 2023). Primary attachments are in the microsystem, which are most connect to the child, and as the systems move away from the child, influences are more connected with secondary attachments. Being conscious of the influences that support a child's development, places the practitioner in a better position to develop a relationship with the child's family and meet the child's holistic developmental needs (McMahon and Dyer, 2018).

Safety

Practitioners must also consider safety when exploring the concept of holistic child development. According to Maslow (1943), safety refers to need to feel secure their environment. A lack of safety can affect a child's holistic development detrimentally.

Laxton and Cooper (2022) state that emergency settings, such as refugee camps, can be a dangerous place to live, especially for vulnerable children to exploitation, who are prone to violence and neglect. These vulnerable children can have a lack of basic nutrition, safety, sanitation and may be separated from family members. These are needs that Maslow (1943) argues that are essential for a child to develop. Protected environments are needed to provide a place for parents to leave their children knowing they are safe, supervised and well cared for. When a child is in extreme conditions, a safe early years environment provides children with the opportunity to play and develop holistically, away from pressures from the outside world (Laxton and Cooper, 2022). Attending a safe, play-based setting, provides stability within an often chaotic situation. This structure helps a child feel safe during daunting times, which is crucial for a child's development. The opportunity to play and explore safely allows children to have independence, take risks and problem solve without the fear of failure. (Macdonald, 2022). These good experiences compensate for the adversities these children face (Rutter, 1985). Play provides the opportunity and safe place to enable development in all areas. This is supported by Save the Children (2008) who state that children in emergency situations need safe, child friendly spaces to support the growth of their development. These safe spaces

can support children by restoring their normal flow of development through normalising play activities, reduce levels of stress from recent events, and learn coping strategies through the medium of play.

Self-Esteem

Practitioners must also consider the self-esteem of a child when exploring the concept of holistic child development. Self-esteem refers to the desire for achievement, confidence and recognition (Maslow, 1943). It is important that a child has a positive self-esteem as it aids all other areas of development.

The Welsh Assembly (2002) recognises the significance play has on the whole development of children, especially regarding the wellbeing of children. Play is an vital part of development, and the Welsh Assembly is committed to ensuring that all children in Wales have access to stimulating environments, full of challenge, which will develop their physical, social, mental and emotional skills.

As babies become mobile, it is important they have unrestricted movement and are allowed to take risks during development. This allows their attitude towards movement and play to develop. If children are not allowed to take risk and practice their balance while learning to walk, they develop less confidence and self-esteem. Ironically, by keeping babies ‘safe’, this makes them more prone to accidents as they have not been allowed to develop their skills, which affects their self-esteem (Brodie, 2018). Just by having simple obstacle courses, such as blocks to step on and off, helps build confidence in children and assists their holistic development. This is supported by the Health and Safety Executive (2012) who states that when providing play opportunities, the goal is not to remove the risks from a child’s environment but to understand the benefits of risk to a child. “No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool” (Health and Safety Executive, 2012, pp. 1).

While children are playing, the physical exertion is releasing endorphins and provides a good feeling that promotes joy in children, increasing the endorphins levels in the brain. This release of endorphins supports relaxation and the emotional health of the child (Tinney, 2022). Through this exertion, a child is developing their emotional, physical and cognitive development. This shows that self-esteem can help a child develop holistically.

To summarise, holistic development is a complex concept. Relationships, safety and self-esteem are interconnected, and all affect the holistic development of a child. All three concepts link to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and are all necessary for the self-actualisation of the child.

Part 3 - Offer three examples from early years practice to highlight Maslow's significance in understanding child development.

This piece of work will be looking at the importance of an early years practitioner in the understanding of the importance of the basic needs of a child, as well as the creating a safe environment and building the confidence and independence of a child, linking to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

According to the Child Poverty Action Group (2024), in the average classroom, 30% of children are living in poverty. Child poverty is high and is expected to rise further during the cost of living crisis that is currently happening in the UK. The impact that poverty has can be shown in Maslow (1943). Maslow argues that a child's basic needs must be met for the child to achieve the best out of life. Therefore, an early years practitioner must help in providing these basic needs as many children are now being affected by poverty. This can be shown in nutrition. An early years setting may be the only time a child receives a warm, nutritious meal. This is why it is important for practitioners to understand the basic needs of a child, as not all children receive these essential needs at home.

The Welsh Government (2024a) says children need to eat a balanced meal to have healthy growth and development. An early years practitioner plays an important part of this by providing nutritious food and creating an environment that encourages children to develop a positive mindset towards health. As explained by the Welsh Government (2024b), children should be following the Eatwell guide to receive a healthy, balanced diet. Children should be eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day. This can be supported by early years practitioners by giving the child fruit during snack time. Practitioners should also follow the Eatwell guide during lunch time by providing a balanced meal from the five food groups to help the child get a wide range of nutrients. These food groups include starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, protein, dairy and fat and oil. For example, if the practitioner provides the child with a cottage pie for lunch, the mashed potato would be a starchy food, dairy

and oil. The meat would be protein, and the onion and carrots would be vegetables. By the practitioner providing a healthy, balanced meal such as this, the child is giving the correct nutrients to develop, according to Maslow (1943).

Article 12 of the UN convention of the rights of the child states that a child has the right to express their views in all matters affecting them (UNICEF, 1989) Therefore, a child has the right to participate in processes and decisions that affect their lives. Children must lead the transition process to feel safe and secure in their new environment. Early Years practitioners can support this by having empathy during the transition process. The transition period is key to establishing a sense of safety and security. In the new curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings, it states that a child needs to made safe and secure in their new environment. This can be done by the practitioner getting to know the child before they begin and by giving the child time and space to get comfortable (Welsh Government, 2022). This helps children feel safe as it helps build trust between the child and practitioner.

Attachments are important during the development of a child. Having a parent present during the transition process also enables the development of secondary attachments which can ease the child into the new environment at their own pace. As the attachment between the child and practitioner develops, the child will begin to explore the environment, including interacting with other children. Additionally, attachments between children and early years practitioners are important as when a child has a close relationship with enabling adults, they experience a nurturing environment which helps a child to develop skills that support good mental health. The Department for Education (2023) claims that when a child is in a safe environment, with adults they trust, they learn to self-regulate their emotions and communicate their needs.

Practitioners can encourage children to make choices for themselves to build their confidence and independence. This can be shown in outdoor play. Play is an crucial part of a child’s holistic development. Play is defined as “a behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children. Play takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise” (UNICEF, 2013, pp. 5).

By developing an outdoor environment that the children can engage with, such as, rocks, trees and soil, children will want to play. By the practitioner giving the children

the agency to make choices, children can make mess in an outdoors environment, without the fear of an adult telling them they may get messy. The children are able to balance on tree trunks without being told not to climb (Tinney, 2022). This type of support from an early year's practitioner allows the child to build their confidence and independence, without the fear of making mistakes. Play reduces anxiety and stress and increases calmness, resilience and the ability to deal with change.

Promoting independence and confidence is important as children are to develop the self-esteem needs that Maslow state are important for self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). Through the trial and error, they learn from their mistakes and gain a sense of achievement, building on Maslow's need for self-esteem. Building on this need for self, esteem comes the idea of the benefits children receive from play. If the children are enjoying playing in the outdoors, their brain releases endorphins, increasing the dopamine levels in the brain. The children are rewarded with joy and pleasure though play, increasing their emotional health (Greenway and Hutchings 2022).

In conclusion, Maslow is significant to Early Years practice as his hierarchy of needs can help an early years practitioner understand what is needed to support a developing child. Basic needs, safe environments and confidence all link to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and are essential in supporting child development in an early years setting.