

Human Development

Module: ECEY4001

Student ID: 2507924

Submission Date: 29 November 2025

Word Count: 2959

I can confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I can 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.

Section 1

2507924 ECEY4001 Word Count: 976

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Introduction

Maslow believed that every person has basic needs that should be met for them to grow and have a happy and successful life. Maslow created a clear and effective pyramid model that highlights those needs starting from basic, physiological needs up until the need of self-actualization, and expresses the importance that those basic needs must be met for successful development throughout life and to ensure people reach their highest potential (Pichère, 2015).

Calmsage (2021)



Ego Need

Rojas, et al (2023) suggests that the need for self-esteem is important as it helps people understand their self-worth which is essential for development. Building self-esteem is important for children to gain a better understanding of themselves as they will start to understand what they are capable of and what values they have. Having a good understanding of self-worth gives children the skills to be resilient in navigating the challenges that may occur throughout childhood and encourages them to make the best choices for themselves. Children that feel competent, respected, and appreciated will develop further their overall development as they build confidence in themselves which motivates them to build relationships, reach higher goals and flourish throughout life and society.

Physiological Need

The first level of the pyramid is physiological needs which are the need for food, air, water, and health. Maslow identifies these needs as the most important ones for any human to survive and function. If any of these basic needs are removed, then the person will struggle to develop further as they will be consumed with the need to survive. A person without food will continuously think about food, not leaving any room to focus on other aspects of life like personal growth, social interactions, school, and learning so it is essential for physiological needs to be met first for people to grow and thrive (Stoianov, 2017).

Not having food, air and water will have an impact on the entire body. Lacking the nutrients that power the body and mind will lead to serious health issues such as lack of energy, low immune system, mental health issues and the brain does not function properly. All these things interlink and will have a knock-on effect, so it is essential to ensure that all children and adults have access to basic needs of water, air, food, and health to promote development and for each person to flourish (unicef, no date).

Safety Need

The need to feel safe, have stability and shelter is important for growth and development. The sense of feeling safe whether with a person or an environment, encourages children to be curious and explore new things, enhancing their skills and knowledge of the world. The need for safety for some children could be through the stability of having routines and structure throughout the day or week. Knowing what is happening and what to expect can calm children and allows them to open their minds to exciting new things around them. The lack of consistency in daily life could make a child feel worried, on edge and unsafe as the child never knows what to expect next. This could have an impact on the physiological needs of the child as the sense of feeling unsafe and anxious can affect mental health or eating habits (Maslow, 1943).

Social Need

Mason, et al. (2021) suggests that it is important for everyone to feel a sense of community to have a better understanding of themselves as people feel safe to explore and experience new things without worry as well as share ideas that are valued. The need of belonging and love is important for children to gain confidence in meeting new people which helps them form emotional connections and build social skills. That sense of community, belonging and love encourages children to learn and develop new skills, it motivates children to make mistakes and learn from them as they know no matter what, they are loved and supported. This gives the reassurance children need to grow into the best versions of themselves. Not having the need of love and belonging could impact children's well-being and mental health making them feel sad, lonely, and anxious which could lead to more serious health issues. This can hinder the child's development as they will be consumed with those thoughts, making it difficult to concentrate and have new learning experiences.

Self-Actualization

Self-Actualization is the last level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs this is when a person has reached their full and unique potential. If an individual has reached the level of self-actualization they would have a positive self-image, confidence, and overall good well-being. They will have a deeper understanding of personal values and beliefs and use these to drive personal meaningful goals in life. Children will become resilient and handle challenges easier, seeing them as learning opportunities and not negative experiences which is important to keep moving forward in life. Louca, et al (2023) says that Maslow suggests reaching this level of need is important for children as encourages them to seek out new opportunities to continuously grow and develop into the best version of themselves throughout life and reach their full potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion Maslow's hierarchy of needs is important as it identifies the basic holistic needs of children and young people. It acknowledges what is important for the overall well-being of children and young people as they grow and mature. Meeting each level of need supports and promotes the importance of health, safety, love, respect, positive self-image and continuous personal growth and development throughout life. Without these basic needs met it can stunt growth and development as the individual will just be focusing on survival. Ensuring these basic needs are met is essential for each person to flourish and reach their full and unique potential (Weinberg, 2011).

References

Calmsage (2021) *Understanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Know What You Really Want*. Available at: <https://www.calmsage.com/understand-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/> (Accessed: 23 November 2025)

Maslow, A.H. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological review*, 50(4), pp. 370–396. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>. (Accessed: 21 November 2025)

Mason, C.Y. *et al.* (2021) *Compassionate school practices : fostering children's mental health and well-being*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

Papaleontiou - Louca, E., Esmailnia, S. and Thoma, N. (2023) 'Spirituality of the developing person according to Maslow', *New ideas in psychology*, 69. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2022.100994>. (Accessed: 21 November 2025)

Pichère, P. and Cadiat, A.-C. (2015) *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Translated by C. Probert. Namur: Lemaitre Publishing.

Rojas, M., Méndez, A. and Watkins-Fassler, K. (2023) 'The hierarchy of needs empirical examination of Maslow's theory and lessons for development', *World development*, 165. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106185>. (Accessed: 21 November 2025)

Stoianov, S. (2017) *An analysis of Abraham Maslow's A theory of human motivation*. London, [England: Routledge.]

Unicef (no date) *Early Childhood Development*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development> (Accessed: 20 November 2025)

Weinberg, D.R. (2011) 'Montessori, Maslow, and Self-Actualization', *Montessori life*, p. 16.

Link to Infograph: [Infograph.pptx](#)

Section 2

This section will focus on holistic child development through the lens of transitions, play and attachment theories, and how they link to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Brodie (2018) states that holistic means looking at a person as a whole instead of just focusing on the sub divided areas of the person. Holistic development is when all areas of growth, individual needs, development, and learning are combined to ensure the best support for children and young people. Children do not learn new skills and knowledge in a linear way, children's learning is fluid, and children are able to learn new things at the same time or they can sometimes regress so it is important to ensure a holistic look into development so adults can see the milestones children have reached and what support needs to be given to help children reach their goals. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides that holistic framework for practitioners to follow and combine with school curriculum to ensure that all basic needs are met for children to learn and thrive.

Transitions are continuous throughout life and a vertical transition that has an impact on a child's holistic development is the transition from home to starting nursery in a school setting. The transition into a new setting might be daunting and hard for a young child as it is an unfamiliar environment, new people and the child will have to eventually go into class without the parents, taking away that child's sense of security. Not feeling safe impacts, the child's well-being and development as the child may become distressed, upset, anxious and scared going into school making that transition difficult for the child. Naaz and Khalid (2023) state that Maslow's theory suggests having the basic need of safety taken away could impact the other needs of the child as they will be focusing on surviving and finding safety in the unfamiliar environment instead of learning new skills and progressing onto further development. So, it is essential for practitioners to form secure attachments with the children to make them feel safe and help them thrive in school.

Crittenden (2017) says that Bowlby identified attachments as people forming bonds to seek comforting and safe relationships, this could be with parents, family members or practitioners. Bowlby highlights it is important for practitioners to make those attachments with children as it builds a sense of security for the child without having the need of the parents being with them. This bond helps the child feel happy

going into school making that transition from home to school easier. Through having that positive and safe attachment it helps the child grow holistically as that safety need is fulfilled the child is confident to explore, engage in activities, make emotional connections, and gain learning experiences and skills that will help them flourish throughout school.

A way practitioners can build positive attachments with children is through play. Play is essential in child development as it's the way children start to understand the world and the way they learn best. Play provides a natural, calm, and enjoyable atmosphere and can help children calm down and regulate their emotions if they are distressed about anything such as a transition from home life to starting school. Through 1:1 play the child becomes more familiar and at ease with the practitioner forming bonds over positive fun experiences and happiness, building that sense of security, safety, and trust. Having the basic need of safety met means the transition into school will become easier as the child has that bond of trust and feels safe with the practitioner. The child will be confident to explore more of the setting and engage in further play leading them to gain new knowledge, skills and relationships helping them become a resilient, confident, and well-rounded person (UNICEF 2022).

Another transition that could affect a child's development is moving to a different class. Moving classes may make children feel nervous, anxious, lonely, and isolated so it is important for that child to feel a sense of safety and belonging when transitioning. A way for practitioners to help with the transition is meeting the child before they officially start the class and make that initial bond with them. Forming an attachment with the child beforehand can make the child a little less nervous when starting the class as they are familiar with the practitioner and if the child is in distress the teacher will be able to understand how to help them. This links to Maslow's hierarchy of needs as when children have the sense of safety and support when facing challenges, it helps children learn ways to self-regulate, break down and understand why they are feeling the way they are and become resilient. This improves the children's overall well-being and development because they will be able to problem solve and deal with challenges in the future on their own, helping them grow as a person (Wilson, 2025).

Conkbayir and Pascal (2021) say that Bronfenbrenner's attachment theory highlights the importance of practitioners making attachments and relationships with the child and their family as these are the people who mostly have an impact on a child's development. Communication is key between the practitioner and family when children are transitioning from one classroom to another. The practitioner can learn more about the child, their individual needs, interests, family, and cultural background. This information can be used to engage with the child more such as talking about interests and then incorporating their interests into the classroom activities. So, when the child begins in the new class, they will feel a sense of belonging and community leading to a stronger bond between the child and practitioner as the child will feel valued and listened too. This ensures the child's love and safety needs are fulfilled, allowing them to continue to grow and become the best versions of themselves.

In conclusion ensuring the basic physiological, safety and belonging needs of children is essential during transitions. Practitioners can ensure this through creating a safe and rich learning environment for all children that supports their individual needs. Ensuring these basic needs are met creates the building blocks for children to thrive in all other areas of learning. Holistic development is essential for growth and development and article 6 of the UN convention on the rights of the child states that every child has the right to reach their full potential (UNICEF, n.d.).

References

Brodie, K. (2018) *The holistic care and development of children from birth to three : an essential guide for students and practitioners*. Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Conkbayir, M. and Pascal, C. (2021) 'Early childhood theories and contemporary issues : an introduction /', in. London, England: Zed Books. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474235075>. (Accessed: 25 November 2025)

Crittenden, P.M. (2017) 'Gifts from Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby', *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, 22(3), pp. 436–442. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104517716214>. (Accessed:24 November 2025)

Naaz, Dr.H and Khalid, Dr.S. (2023). 'Relevance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Education'. *International Journal of Physics and Social Sciences*, 13,pp.1-8. Available at: https://www.ijmra.us/project%20doc/2023/IJPSS_JUNE2023/IJPSS3July23_22806.pdf. (Accessed: 24 November 2025)

UNICEF (2022). How play strengthens your child's mental health. *UNICEF*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-development/how-play-strengthens-your-childs-mental-health>.(Accessed: 25 November 2025)

UNICEF (n.d.). *UN convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC)*. unicef. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>. (Accessed: 25 November 2025)

Wilson, T. (2025) *Working with parents, carers and families in the early years : the essential guide* . Second edition. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315691206 Chapter 4 pp. 63-83

Section 3

In this section I am going to reflect on my previous experiences working in early years settings using Gibbs model of reflection and discuss how important Maslow's theory is for practitioners to understand child development (Gibbs, 1988).

From reflecting on my practice, I can see that Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a great and simple framework for understanding children's development. One example I would like to reflect on is when a child starts day care nursery. It is difficult for a child to trust a new unfamiliar adult and having the sense of safety when their parents are not there. From my experience I have seen a child upset and in distress, clinging to their mother not wanting to let her go. This action and behaviour from the little girls showed me she has a strong attachment with her mother. According to Early Years TV (n.d.), Bowlby suggests that young children go through a phase of favouriting adults and this could lead to separation anxiety from not feeling safe with a new unfamiliar adult. When trying to encourage the little girl to come into the nursery I felt nervous and became flustered as I was running out of ideas and topics that peak her interests and unsure if I was doing the right thing. I felt relieved once I found out that she loves doing arts and crafts I used that as a bridge of connection for her to calm down, gain her trust and show her it is safe for her to come to me.

From this experience I have learned that making those attachments and providing emotional security for children is essential for children to feel safe. Without the sense of safety and security children will only focus on the lack of it, leading to the child becoming anxious, distressed, and upset and not wanting to explore new experiences. (Trivedi and Mehta, 2019).

If this happened again, I would be more confident in showing my gentler side and creating a safer environment through continuous reassurance, kindness and makes those bonds to make the transition of coming into the day nursery smoother. I would also change the environment to make it more engaging and stimulating towards her interests and needs to provide a safe and rich learning environment. Yelland and Wagorn (2023) highlight that it is important that practitioners provide supportive and secure relationships with children to ensure the children's basic needs to feel safe and secure are met for them to gain confidence and explore, learn new skills, develop further, and thrive in life.

Another experience I would like to reflect on is working with children who have adhd. I started working in a primary school and worked with a boy within a mainstream class who struggled to concentrate, sit down for more than 5 minutes, and did not engaging with the rest of the class. Banerjee (2013) suggests that children with adhd encounter more school difficulties such as poor organization skills, listening skills, find it hard to participate, can be quite loud and disruptive due to their brain development and overload of information. Using Malsow's theory to look at the child holistically helped me identify that the child's sense of belonging and self-esteem needs were not being met. This made me upset as I understand how isolating that could be for a child.

From this information I was able to work with the teacher and create a better routine for the child, ensuring shorter amounts of time to work and concentrate with brain break intervals where he can play and use his energy. I found it difficult at first as some days it would work but other days, he would struggle with the change of routine but once we found the best-balanced routine for him it benefitted him. Stoyanov (2017) says that Maslow implies that children should have a safe, organised, and predictable environment for children to develop well. The routine helped him become calmer in class giving him the chance to engage fully in the lesson and group work which in turn helped him make friends within the class. His standard of work become better as he was able to concentrate more for that smaller amount of time and retain the information. He was being praised for his hard work which led to him being happier in school and driven and he had the right balance between work and play which stimulated his thought process more. The child's need for belonging and self-esteem was met which helped him thrive socially, emotionally, and academically in school as well as the child's right to an education – article 28 of the UNCRC and the right to relax, play and take part - article 31 of the UNCRC (UNICEF (n.d.).

I have learnt from this experience how essential it is for basic needs to be met for children to learn academically. In future practice I will ensure I identify any struggles children may be having and use a holistic approach provide them with the best chance of learning and development. I will provide children with the sense of belonging and promote self-esteem through praise, positively reacting to children's ideas and participation, and putting work on displays in the classroom. Ensuring the

children's belonging needs are met encourages them to be self-confident, feel valued and part of the class which supports their emotional and social development (James, 2025).

A final experience I would like to reflect on is ensuring a child's physiological needs are met. I noticed previously that a child in my class would come into school tired, had no energy and started to have emotional outbursts. The other staff members and I in the class became concerned about the child's well-being as this was occurring multiple mornings throughout the week. The class teacher spoke to the parents, and we found out the little girl was struggling with food and through using Maslow's theory we identified that due to the basic physiological need of hunger not being met it affected other areas of needs like her sleeping, emotions and physical development (Maslow, 1943).

To help meet the child's physiological needs and ensure article 3 and 6 of the UN convention of the rights of the child we made changes to the routine and environment. We added breakfast to our morning routine and bought lots of options of food for her to try, we added in extra snack times for her to always have access to food if she is hungry and ensured we created a calm environment so she would not become anxious around food. We asked her if she wanted to sit by friends, hoping that if she sees others eating it will encourage her to eat and finally, when she did eat food, we showered her with praise which brought her confidence back with eating food. Through building confidence and eating more food it had a knock-on effect with energy, sleeping, emotions and she became happier and had the energy to explore and learn in class. (UNICEF, n.d.).

The difficulty of this is that we did not want to push her and make the situation worse, so we wanted to create a natural environment that encourages her to eat while allowing her to make the decision and take the step. If this arises in the future, I will try techniques and give them time to work as I felt we were just hopping from one to another without letting it take effect. My experience has allowed me to think outside the box and use reflective practice to improve my own practice and become creative in finding strategies that helps children physiological needs and now I can use these techniques in further practice to ensure all basic needs of children are met (Mukherji and Dryden, 2014).

In conclusion Maslow's theory is essential for practitioners to understand child development. Maslow's theory guides practitioners to look beyond behaviour and check to see whether a child's basic needs are being met. Incorporating Maslow's theory into practice enables myself and other practitioners to provide a safer, more sensitive, responsive care and encourages practitioners to create engaging and stimulating environments that suits every child's individual needs, ensuring every child can flourish and reach their full potential (Naaz and Khalid, 2023)

References

- Banerjee, S. (2013) *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents*. Edited by S. Banerjee. Place of publication not identified: IntechOpen.
- Early Years TV (n.d.) *John Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Developmental Phases*. Available at: <https://www.earlyyears.tv/john-bowlbys-attachment-theory-and-developmental-phases> (Accessed: 29 November 2025).
- Gibbs, G. and Great Britain. Further Education Unit. (1988) *Learning by doing : a guide to teaching and learning methods*. London: FEU.
- James, C. (2025). *A Sense of Belonging in the Early Years: Building Foundations for a Lifetime*. Available at: <https://earlyyears.wandsworth.gov.uk>Pages>Download> (Accessed 29 Nov. 2025)
- Maslow, A.H. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological review*, 50(4), pp. 370–396. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>. (Accessed: 21 November 2025)
- Mukherji, P. and Dryden, L. (eds) (2014) *Foundations of early childhood : principles and practice*. 1st ed. Los Angeles, California: SAGE.
- Naaz, Dr.H and Khalid, Dr.S. (2023). 'Relevance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Education'. *International Journal of Physics and Social Sciences*, 13,pp.1-8. Available at: https://www.ijmra.us/project%20doc/2023/IJPSS_JUNE2023/IJPSS3July23_22806.pdf. (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
- Stoyanov, S. (2017) *An Analysis of Abraham H. Maslow's a Theory of Human Motivation*, Macat International Limited, Milton. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. (29 November 2025)
- Trivedi, A. and Mehta, A. (2019). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs -Theory of Human Motivation. *International Journal of Research in All Subjects in Multi Languages*, 7(6), pp.38–41. Available at: https://www.raijmr.com/ijrsml/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IJRSML_2019_vol07_issue_06_Eng_09.pdf. (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
- UNICEF (n.d.). *UN convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC)*. unicef. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>. (Accessed: 25 November 2025)
- Yelland, N. & Waghorn, E. (2023) STEM learning ecologies: collaborative pedagogies for supporting transitions to school. *International journal of early years education*. 31 (1), 216–235. doi:10.1080/09669760.2020.1863193.