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Human development – part 1 Infographic

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Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Physiological needs - Maslow (1987) states that physiological needs are the most basic and take highest priority as they are vital for human survival, therefore a person who is deprived of essential necessities will therefore likely be motivated towards basic needs such as air, water, food and health before any other needs. Physiological needs are predominantly guided by a person's natural bodily urges and basic needs, for example, a person that is dehydrated will look for water and a person who is hungry will seek food, if a person is deprived of oxygen, their body will react immediately and if there is a deficiency of vitamins in the body, the body will work to restore balance, this is referred to as homeostasis (Poston, 2009, p. 348). Physiological needs are considered a priority because as well as being crucial to stay alive it shows that human motivation follows a hierarchy and that a person who is deprived of food, safety, relationships and self-esteem will likely seek food as a priority. Lack of these physiological needs will affect a person's physical and mental health, it can lead to stress and illness and bad judgements, once all these physiological needs are satisfied a person can then move on to focus on higher levels of needs (Maslow, 1987, p.38).



Safety needs -Once physiological needs are fulfilled, other needs will begin to appear, the second stage focuses on ensuring our safety needs are met, this includes protection from environmental hazards such as the environment and weather, predators and other potential enemies, this stage also involves maintaining psychological and emotional security. This stage is strongly driven by a humans most fundamental emotion, fear (West, 2025, p.22). Maslow indicates that the need for security motivates individuals to stick with what they already know rather than deal with uncertain or new circumstances (Pichère and Gadiat, 2015). A person's safety needs can differ depending on the stage in their life and circumstances, for example an adult's safety needs may include protection, stability and living without fear, however an infant's idea of safety may include a functioning and loving home and an un-interrupted routine (Poston, 2009, p.350), in addition to this, Maslow describes an infant's safety needs as easier to recognise and there is a much more direct reaction to illnesses and a lack of reaction to dangers surrounding them. The purpose of satisfying a person's safety needs is to ensure stability in their lives, fear will significantly limit a person's progression to the higher stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Sense of belonging - Once physiological and safety needs are met, the desire for social connections and love and affection will begin to emerge. Human beings have a natural social aspect; we desire to have a connection within our community and want to feel valued and respected by other people, therefore a human's desire for belonging drives us to establish friendships and participate in clubs or group activities (Maltby, Day and Macaskill, 2017, p.131). Being part of a group can play an important part in an individual's development, a person may find themselves facing new challenges and can therefore make them feel encouraged giving them a sense of enjoyment (West, 2025, p.37). A need for love and acceptance will also differentiate depending on where a human being is in their lives, an adult may desire friendships, romantic relationships and a family whereas a child's view on love and acceptance may involve seeking recognition and acceptance and feeling a sense of connection with their parents (Poston, 2009, p. 350). Children need both their physical needs and emotional needs such as love and care to be fulfilled to use their imagination and reach their potential (Eaude, 2020, p. 11). The discovery of neglected children suffering trauma within Romanian orphanages following the fall of communism showed that humans need love from birth and that deprivation can be harming (West, 2025, p. 39).

Self-Esteem - Maslow (1987) describes the Esteem needs as being separated into two secondary acts, first, self-esteem and having a desire to be strong, confident, capable, successful and independent and secondly a desire of respect from others including personal significance, appreciation, recognition and power. Lack of these can lead to feelings of vulnerability, lack of strength and low self-worth. A person who has reached the second level of Maslow's definition of Esteem needs tend to already have accepted themselves and following that the acceptance of others greatly enhances a person's self-confidence, Maslow claims that most psychological difficulties come from low self-esteem, individuals are likely to be highly critical of themselves if they view themselves in a negative way therefore preventing someone from the ability to succeed, in addition to this, lack of appreciation and recognition from other can lead to feelings of underachievement, shame and lack of ability. However, meeting these needs promotes feelings of self-worth and feeling respected and valued, providing progression towards personal development and self-actualization (Poston, 2009, p.351).



Self-actualization - Maslow describes self-actualization as meeting our deficit needs and progressing into our growth needs to reach our full potential, these can include Spirituality, purpose, social activities and transcendent love (West, 2025, p. 72). Self-actualization can be seen as rare and is often shown through a person's creativity such as artists, musicians or authors (Stoianov, 2019, p.518). Self-actualization will depend on a person's social and biological needs being met, each stage of Maslow's hierarchy differs from the others, however the earlier stages will remain significant and continue to function as a person reaches the higher stages of the hierarchy (Bauer, 2021, p. 518). It is also suggested that if higher stage opportunities are taken away, it may lead people to fall back to earlier stages of the hierarchy and that having limited opportunities may result in a person being unable to progress past a certain stage (Robinson, 2008, p.103). Maslow claimed that people who are mentally healthy are motivated in similar ways and that reaching self-actualization is the most valuable and positive goal.

Human development – part 2 The concept of Holistic development

Holistic development looks at addressing a person as a whole, while still recognising the individual parts, holistic development looks at each area of progression, skills and knowledge and how they are interlinked with one another, holistic learning also implies that a delay in an area of development can affect other areas in progressing (Brodie, 2018, p.13). Similarly to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) it looks at progression through a person's life and how being unable to attain what is needed on previous stages will not allow a person to progress throughout the hierarchy.

Holistic development starts with ensuring a child has their essential needs met, the basic needs of a child according to Maslow (1943) are based on a person's fundamental needs of survival these are air, food and water, shelter and primary physical health and mental health. It is important that a child has their basic needs fulfilled in holistic development as these needs are underlying for further development, according to UNICEF (no date) the early years are critical in building a foundation for a child's holistic development and that when a healthy growth is experienced at this stage it helps children reach their full potential developmentally, it also states that children who are deprived of these basic fundamental needs are at risk of fatality or illness, struggling academically and on a whole at a long term disadvantage. In addition to this according to Nurturing Care (2020) a child requires adequate nutrition such as nutrition from the mother or support nutritionally, good hygiene and access to drinking water, a safe place from neglect and abuse, immunizations and access to healthcare and healthy movement and sleep, UNICEF also states there are a significant number of children under the age of 5 living with serious illnesses due to a lack of proper sanitation and drinking water, this corresponds with Maslow's physiological needs and that they need to be attained for a person to function properly.

To gain the concept of holistic child development it is necessary to consider safety, Nurturing Care (2020) tells us that children need fresh air both indoors and outdoors and good hygiene standards to keep them safe from health issues, environmental safety can result from a nurturing and safe home environment. A child's physical safety can be addressed through

environmental factors but also protection from harm, neglect or abuse, Emotional or psychological abuse can be seen as a child's emotional needs being ignored or if a child is exposed different types of abuse, also as a result of abuse or neglect children can experience delays in their development, be angry or display over affectionate behaviour, find it difficult to regulate emotions and therefore are at higher risk of developing mental health issues (Platt and Horwath, 2019, p. 392). Similarly to Maslow's hierarchy (1943) defines a child's Safety needs as safeguarding children from potential dangers and environmental hazards as well as attaining to their physical safety needs and emotional safety needs as these are vital for progression as they ensure their lives have stability.

Positive relationships will also play a vital role in holistic development, according to Birth to 5 matters (2021) children's well-being must be supported for holistic learning, practitioners can support children's confidence by creating an environment that is positive, affectionate and enjoyable. Positive relationships are often characterized through engaging interaction and that these minor responses will affect the brains development and have positive influences on a child's holistic development (Johnson, 2010, p. 4). Bowlby (1969) highlights attachment behaviour being biologically determined, this shows through a child's need to be within proximity to their caregiver to develop their confidence and discover their surroundings. A primary caregiver may be interpreted to other people not just a mother, including a childminder or practitioner, this is a person the child has created an additional bond with, this bond will support the child in coping with stress which can often be enhanced in the childcare or educational settings. Unstable attachments and poor relationships for the child can often lead to attention deficit, slower cognitive development, hostile reactions and self-harm or harm to others, collectively, these factors show the vital importance of positive relationships to support holistic development from the very start of a child's life (Robinson, 2008, p. 114). In conjunction with this Maslow (1943) describes individuals as having a desire to bond with others and that children can seek a positive relationship, love and acceptance and a strong connection with their parent or carer, however children who do not experience positive relationships or are neglected will experience negative effects on their development preventing them from progressing to the next stage of the hierarchy.

Human development – part 3 Maslow's significance in understanding child development.

The early years is a crucial time to develop children's wellbeing and resilience and prepare them for learning therefore ensuring the correct support is given early will create a robust foundation for future healthy development, children's development and learning are strongly connected (Brodie, 2018, p.12). In relevance to this Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) shows stages of different needs and without fulfilling these needs will prohibit further development and that children like all other living things have needs and that fulfilling these needs will support a child's healthy development and build a firm foundation towards success in the future (Medcalf, Hoffman and Boatwright, 2013, p 1326). This assignment will focus on how Maslow's theory effects practice in the Early years supported by practical examples.

In accordance with the first level of Maslow's hierarchy, a child's physiological needs need to be met before they can progress further, for example on a regular basis, child A and child B are siblings and their attendance is exceptional but their needs are not being fulfilled at home and they are attending school hungry and tired, they do not access the school's breakfast club and are therefore dysregulated in the classroom, it is noticeable that the siblings haven't been taken care of at home but they will often mention hunger, as practitioners we will offer the children something to eat immediately, fruit from the snack shop or toast from the canteen followed by free nutritional school dinners, if the children are feeling tired in school there is always a space for them to have a rest and as practitioners we try to ensure that this is in a calm environment but with large classes this is not always the case, however giving the children the opportunity to rest can help them regulate their emotions and focus their attention, these issues are raised as causes of concern each time they occur and are directed to the safeguarding officer in the school. Maslow's theory stresses that the physiological needs such as food and rest are fundamental to support a healthy balance in the body (Harper, Harper and Stills, 2003, p.12) therefore giving children the coping skills to regulate and achieve academic performance.

It is also important to make sure as practitioners we are maintaining an environment that ensures children are safe, this can include providing consistent routines but also adapting them to the child, for example Child C is on the Autistic spectrum, transitions are a difficult thing for him to adjust to, he is over overstimulated on the busy school yard coming into school and leaving, this is causing a knock on effect on his parents, as Child C not only becomes dysregulated but abruptly leaves the area his parents are in causing worry, to overcome this situation, as practitioners and alongside the leadership team, Child

C's routines have been adapted so that he starts school 10 minutes before the rest of the school and finishes 10 minutes before the end of the school day. These changes support him and his parents as the school yard is empty, giving parents the chance to locate him if he tries to go out of sight but also a calm environment to keep his emotions regulated to come in and leave school at ease. Once a child's physiological needs are met a child's priority is their safety, this includes emotional well-being and physical protection. In the Early years setting this can be seen as ensuring spaces and resources are safe for children, remaining consistent with routines giving the child reassurance and stability and building a trusting relationship with their practitioners to support their confidence with their surroundings (Care learning, 2024).

In addition to this, early years practitioners play a vital role in supporting children to develop their self-confidence and confidence in their skills through different activities and daily interactions, within the early years setting we take time to recognise achievements and encourage effort whilst also giving them opportunities to be responsible and make their own decisions, as practitioners we also celebrate milestones depending on the individual , for example Child D has received full marks on their spelling test again is praised or rewarded, whereas child E who finds it difficult being separated from his parents has come into school and joined in an activity is praised or rewarded for this as, these are both very different achievements but both mean a great deal to these individual children, this is linked closely to Maslow's esteem needs and that achieving competence or meeting standards is not looked at as necessarily being an overachiever and that recognition of individuals successes promotes their confidence and can encourage them to strive to achieve more (Cotton, 1995, p.61).

In conclusion Maslow's theory highlights the significance of basic needs and how linked to an Early years setting these basic needs will promote a child's mental and physical health therefore supporting their physical, social and emotional and cognitive development (Cotton, 1995, p.59) Maslow also analyses the importance of safety and how remaining consistent with routines and ensuring the setting is safe will help develop the child's confidence in their setting, providing them with stability while fostering trust with practitioners (Care Learning 2024) In addition to this Maslow shares the importance of developing a child's esteem needs, and that praising and rewarding achievements whether they be major or minor achievements to the individuals will enhance their self-esteem and motivate them to challenge themselves and progress.

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