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1.

Who is Maslow?

Abraham Harold Maslow was born in 1908 in Brooklyn, New York. Maslow was an American psychologist who introduced a new ~~approach~~ **approach** to humans and their needs. He believed in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and kindness. Throughout his work he focussed on those positive qualities, ~~and~~ **and** the human could reach ~~self-actualisation~~ **self-actualisation** (Soyenov (2017)) In the 1940's he created the model Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory is widely used across many sectors in society today including childcare and education (Chere and Cadist (2015)) Maslow talks about each human need, how the most important and significant needs such as physiological and ~~safety~~ **safety** are ~~primal~~ **primal** for human beings. He explains that not all humans will achieve each need fully before naturally progressing to new emerging ~~needs~~ **needs** (Soyenov (2017)) Maslow talked about having a vision where all humans were ~~actualised~~ **actualised**, living in what he described as ~~an~~ **an** ~~psychia~~ **psychia** world, where humans would live in the greatest communities. Weinberg (2012)

Physiological needs

Maslow describes physiological needs as having food, water, shelter, sleep and clothing. He believes that this need is the most primal for humans to survive. However, this need may be unattainable for those families who are living in poverty. Families who live in poverty would struggle to provide simple things such as food and shelter. This would make it almost impossible for them to naturally progress to the next human need of safety. McKelton and Dyer (2018) Public Health Wales (2024) reported that 2.46 million children under the age of 15 are currently living in poverty in ~~the~~ **the** ~~Save the children~~ **Save the children** (2012) statistics show that one in three children are living in poverty in Wales, with as many as 25% of families frequently skipping meals. These figures will have an adverse effect on education and how well children do at school. McMahon and Dyer (2018) suggest that poverty has a negative impact on children's development in early year education. Nollenmeyer et al. (2012) explains that school achievement is part of growth and would fall under the self-esteem need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Therefore, can only be achieved once the lower needs such as food, water and shelter are achieved.

MASLOW'S Hierarchy of Needs

Self-Actualisation

Maslow believed that a mentally well human could achieve self-actualisation. He explained that reaching this need would mean total fulfillment and ~~actualisation~~ **actualisation**. Furthermore, he believed that humans who reach this need would be more favourable in society, explaining they would be compassionate, caring and generally much better at problem solving. D'Souza (2016) Maslow tells of how the human would have reached their full potential and be ~~very~~ **very** want to be. Mullen and Dryden (2014) it is important to point out that although a person may reach ~~self-actualisation~~ **self-actualisation**. They can, however, move backwards in the hierarchy. A reason for this could be job loss.

Esteem

Esteem is a need that Maslow describes as self, respect and strength. Maslow explains that humans want to be respected and show respect to others. He looks at a person's self and talks about how strength and achievement can increase confidence. He also recognises that humans have a desire to be good, to build a good reputation for themselves, increasing the level of recognition they receive (Soyenov (2017)) Self-esteem in children is very important. How a child feels about themselves can sometimes be influenced by those around them. Having good self-esteem plays a crucial role in how children think and behave. The children's society (2024) it is important that children are supported and praised when they have done something well. The department for education (2022) explain being patient and supporting the child by getting to know them, will help them find their sense of self in early year education.

Love and Belonging

Maslow talks about how humans naturally have a want for affection, closeness and relationships with ~~others~~ **others** explains humans want to be part of a family or loving group. Maslow suggests children get their love and sense of belonging from parents or ~~caregivers~~ **caregivers**. However, he explains that this need is not always met and that parents or caregivers may behave in a way that is seen to be unacceptable ~~into~~ **into** provide love for the child. Maslow (1943) He talks of this rejection and how it can have a profound effect on how ~~that~~ **that** ~~children~~ **children** behave socially (Soyenov (2017)) The Welsh Government (no date) explains love and affection is important to how children's brains develop. The Welsh government talk about the impact parents or caregivers can have on children, ~~display~~ **display** that the way children are responded to will determine how confident they are, or how they manage stress. ~~They~~ **They** talk about how children from loving homes are more secure and feel safe.

2.

This essay will explore the concept of holistic development in children and look at how the practitioner can support those needs of children in the early years. It will explore key areas of learning and compare different theories relating to the holistic needs to support children.

The concept of holistic development means looking at the whole child. Brodie (2018) suggests Holistic development is focussing on the different contributing factors in how a child develops areas of learning, how they develop academically, emotionally and growth in general. Holistic development is looking at all those areas intertwined to support each need. Holistic care and learning go hand in hand in the early years and practitioners focus on the socioemotional development of children. The Welsh Government (2014) state both care and education need to be present for a child to reach their full potential.

Holistic development is important in early year education and practitioners aim to adhere to this approach by supporting them emotionally, physically and by observing how they learn through play. One theorist who believed that play was

essential in early years was Vygotsky. He believed that play could create positive interactions and help support the children's learning experience. He talks of how learning is a process, and children must develop the skills they already naturally have through play interactions. Lindon (2012) Vygotsky believed that learning always involved more than one human. Bodra, et al. (1994)

Children need to build good connections with those that care for them and the practitioner must know the children well, by getting to know the whole child, supporting them holistically. Donaldson (2015) explains having teachers in Wales who understand the importance of building relationships with the children and their parents is key to the development of children in early years. Similarly, the Welsh Government (2022) say that forming positive relationships with children and their families and having a mutual respect are part of the curriculum.

When looking at holistic development in children it is essential to look at relationships. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system is a theory that looks at development as a system of relationships. He discusses how relationships can be impacted by the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. He defines the microsystem as those close relationships, such as close family, friends, neighbours and class teachers. The system moves outwards looking at other relationships that can affect development. Bronfenbrenner suggests that how children develop can be affected by their surroundings, with culture and social construct having an impact. (Simply Psychology, 2024) The mesosystem according to Bronfenbrenner is where those relationships between teachers and children lie. Much like Maslow who suggests love and belonging are a human need where children need to feel part of a something. For example, being in a school class with their friends and being supported by their teacher. Bronfenbrenner highlights the importance of these positive relationships, to support the holistic needs of the child. (Weinberg, 2011)

Like Maslow and Bronfenbrenner, Bowlby highlights the importance of attachment and how it can have an impact on how a child develops holistically. Bowlby suggests that children come into the world naturally wanting to form attachments with those around them. He believes that a child's most important attachment is with the mother, and much like Maslow talks about the hierarchy of

attachments moving on to other family members, such as siblings and grandparents. Bowlby highlights the detrimental effects a break in the attachment between child and mother can have on the development, causing behaviours, resulting cognitive and emotional difficulties. (Holmes, 2014) These theorists all highlight the importance of positive relationships in children's development, and it is the role of the practitioner to know the child and understand those relationships around them to support them in their setting.

It is important for a practitioner to be aware of safety when developing the holistic needs of a child. Montessori was a theorist who explained that a child's freedom is defined by how the adult observes them. She talks about how children learn through movement and being able to move freely but safely in a setting. Pound (2005) Montessori explains that children will not feel safe and can become upset when faced with an environment that is unfamiliar. She talks about how having this order externally will help the child to feel safe and have order in their world. (Isaacs, 2018) Like Montessori, Maslow's theory is very much linked to this view. Maslow believes that children prefer a safe, reliable and predictable world around them. Calling it a prepared environment. (Weinberg, 2011)

However, there are factors that can have a negative effect on how children develop holistically. Maslow suggests that the basic physiological needs such as food, shelter and clothing are the most primal. (Stoyanov, 2017) Unfortunately, not all children have these needs met. The Welsh government statistics show that 31% of children living in Wales are believed to be living in poverty. The Welsh government (2022) Children who live in poverty will experience social barriers and may it difficult to concentrate in school due to hunger or lack of sleep. An Estyn report from 2022-2023 states the impact of poverty on children's education is a huge challenge and needs to become the priority if the children are to thrive. Estyn (2023) Interestingly, Vygotsky suggests that understanding children means looking at their surrounding society and the social relations that can change how children develop. (Bresler, et al, 2001) Here, Vygotsky is pointing out the importance of knowing the child and the family. Poverty and deprivation will also have an impact on children, for example the area in which children live and play can have a direct impact on the child and how they develop. (McMahon and Dyer, 2018)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory could be criticised by some who may say that the theory is more for the middle-class humans in society. (McMahon and Dyer, 2018) Maslow argued that he did not need to focus his theory on mental health because he believed that it was a small minority of humans who suffered. However, today there are a substantial amount of people including children that suffer with mental health. The children's society (2024) state that one in six children between the ages of 5 to 16 suffer with mental health and as many as 5 children in a class of 30 are suffering with a mental health condition. These statistics would argue that Maslow's theory is not up to date and may not be relevant for a good proportion of our society today.

In summary, supporting a child holistically means looking at their emotional, physical and educational wellbeing. It is knowing the child and building strong positive relationships, creating a link and mutual trust between teachers and families. If these strategies are adopted a child may have the opportunity to develop themselves and become health, happy and confident learners.

3.

The objective of this essay is to explore Maslow's significance in early year education, highlighting child development. It will examine three examples for early year practice, what the role of the supporting adult should be and how they support child development. This study will look at transition, attachment and safety in the early years and explore what affect they have on how children develop linking to Maslow.

Children transition many times in a day, these transitions are central to their experiences and wellbeing. Transitions in early years are important to the rights of children and can have an impact on them developmentally, socially and emotionally. Volger, et al (2008) suggests there are different types of transitions that children go through and can be different for each activity. Firstly, there are horizontal transitions. These transitions are less significant and are often part of children's routine, for example, walking from home to school each day. Secondly, there are vertical transitions. These transitions are bigger changes that can have a profound effect on

children. For example, children who start nursery or reception for the first time, these transitions can be difficult for children, and they may need support from those around them to help them deal with this change. Lastly, there are education associated transitions which are changes that happen outside of school and can shape the children's lives and wellbeing. An example of this kind of transition could be parents getting divorced, or frequently moving house (The Open University, 2016).

In early year education, one of the biggest transitions for children is starting reception, this is a huge change for children in many ways. Some children may never have been away from their mother or caregiver for longer than a few hours. The children will be faced with having to adapt to a new environment and will be surrounded by children and staff they may not have met.

According to the Belfast Education and Library board (2011), these transitions can be challenging for children, they can become anxious, scared and sad, setting off a whole range of emotions that can escalate into behaviours. Furthermore, parents can have trouble coping with the separation and the transition can be difficult for the whole family. Research and practice have highlighted the importance of preparing the children and their parents getting them ready for the change. Practitioners can do this by bringing the children and their families into the setting so that the children can get to know staff and their environment before the change takes place. Practitioners must tell the children what is happening now and next so that the children are prepared. By creating this link, Belfast education suggest that the children will build resilience and be able to cope with the changes more confidently and be better equipped to learn.

The Welsh Government (2022) suggest building positive relationships with families and their homes will help create trust, a sense of belonging and wellbeing. Creating these positive relationships has a profound effect on children development during these transitional periods. Maslow's (1943) theory of love and belonging would lend itself to this approach. Maslow talks about how humans have a natural want for closeness and relationships. He suggests that children get that love and sense of belonging from parents or caregivers. Furthermore, building these relationships will help the transition process. The United Nations Convention on the

Rights of the Child (UNCRC) article 6 states children have the right to develop their full potential, and the government have a responsibility to do all they can.

Children need to create secure attachments to feel safe in their environment. Practitioners need to spend time with the children getting to know the whole child. Bowlby (1969) states that all children need to have at least one secure attachment for healthy development. This means practitioners need to create positive relationships with family members to break down any communication barriers that may arise. Some parents may feel as though some practitioners are unapproachable. Therefore, being transparent is a given in early years and there must be an open-door policy whereby parents can voice any concerns. Other barriers could be lack of time and staff, which can have a negative effect on communication. Bronfenbrenner suggests the more links that are created between the microsystems, the more positive the children's experiences and outcomes are likely to be. (Brooker, 2008)

The Welsh government (2020) set out framework that each school would implement, stating that it should be a whole school approach. The framework looks at core values and focuses on the learners, their sense of belonging and how they feel about their relationships with peers and adults in school. This approach is positive for children in early year education and aims to support their mental health and wellbeing. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs would be relevant here. Children need to feel a sense of belonging and feel attached to those around them to move on to the next need of esteem. Once this need has been satisfied the child can fully indulge the next. Children who are content in their relationships will be more confident in themselves and be ready to develop new areas of learning.

Children need to feel safe in their environment to be able to explore confidently. The Welsh Assembly Government (2002) implemented a play policy that discusses the importance of children learning through play, the policy explores how significant play is development and suggests that the environment needs to be enriching for the children to learn. The practitioner must prepare an environment that is both safe and stimulating. Article 31 of the UNCRC explains children have the right to play, relax and take part in a range of activities that are both cultural and creative. The role of the practitioner in early years is to stand back and watch how

the children play and interact, making sure they are doing this safely. Maslow (1943) talks about safety needs and how they are important, he suggests children need a predictable, reliable and prepared environment to develop. (Weinberg, 2011)

In summary, Maslow's theory can help to underpin how children develop in early year education today. The hierarchy supports how children transition, how they form attachments and shows the importance of creating safe environments for the children. Maslow's theory can be adopted by practitioners in early years to support them in their role.

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