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

Component 1-Develop an infographic to explore Maslow's model in depth (1000 words).

Component 2-Explore in depth the concept of holistic child development with links to Maslow's model (1000 words).

Component 3- Offer three examples from early years practice to highlight Maslow's significance in understanding child development. (1000 words)

Maslow's

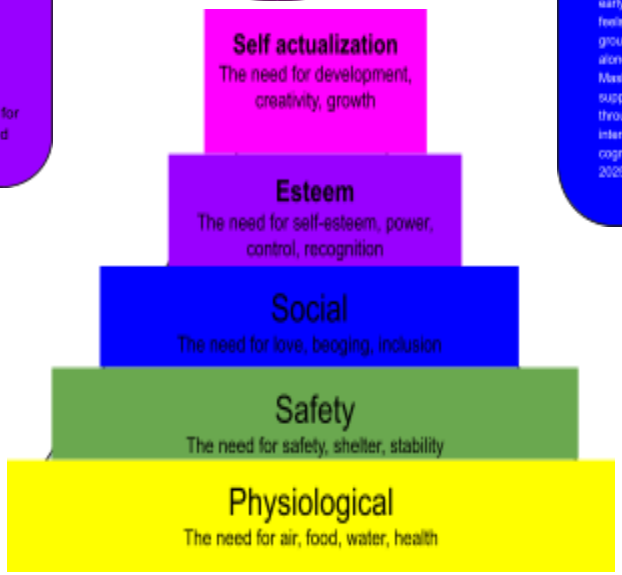
Hierarchy of Needs

The Hierarchy of Needs was first established by Abraham H. Maslow when he published the paper 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943). The hierarchy of needs is designed as a pyramid divided into 5 levels. Each level suggests a human need, physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self actualisation. The pyramid is arranged to suggest that physiological, survival needs are the base then moving up to more creative and intellectually 'self actualization' needs at the top (simplyphycology, 2025).

Self-actualisation- self actualisation is shown in early years children through their curiosity, imagination, and problem-solving. When a child has reached self actualisation they freely explore their surroundings, willing to embrace challenges and show signs of creativity (GOV.uk) Providing children with the opportunity to take part in play based learning and use creative media all enhance this stage in early childhood settings, suggests that self actualization is vital for early years children as it not only shapes their immediate experiences but also lays the groundwork for their future emotional intelligence, academic success, and positive social interactions (GOV.uk). However, Maslow argues that self-actualization is only possible when lower-level needs are consistently met. If a child is hungry, anxious, or feels excluded, they cannot focus on deep learning or creative exploration (simply psychology, 2025). This highlights how important it is for early childhood education to meet each level of the hierarchy.

Esteem -The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy is the needs for respect from peers and self-esteem. This can only be considered when the third level is achieved(simply psychology,2025).
Providing children with the opportunity to take risks, finish things successfully, make decisions, and receive real support boosts their self-esteem. Bandura's theory suggests that when children succeed, even doing small things, their resilience and confidence grows (simplypsychology, 2025). Sue Egersdorff, Pam Mundy (2017) state that Children who haven't met all the needs for esteem will do the opposite and will lack confidence, avoid challenges and look for approval constantly.

Love and belonging - The need for love and belonging is the third level in Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1943). A child's social and emotional development depends on their feeling like they belong. Through their contacts with family, friends, and carers, children develop empathy, communication, cooperation, and identity construction (GOV.UK, 2025). TSW Training (2023) suggests that having a positive relationship with family friends and educators helps children develop a feeling of community in early childhood settings where they feel appreciated and understood. When a child feels appreciated and included, they are more likely to take part in activities, play in groups, and confidently communicate their emotions. However, children who feel alone or excluded may develop low self-esteem, or withdrawal (researchgate, 2009). Maslow's focus on belonging emphasises the need for social learning and emotional support in early childhood education. Practitioners adopt a sense of belonging through inclusive practice, cooperative play, group activities, and compassionate interactions. These methods, which enable children to grow socially, emotionally, and cognitively, are viewed as essential to learning rather than an extra (learningjournals, 2025).



Physiological needs- These are the basic needs for food, water, regulation of temperature and oxygen (Maslow, 1954). For children, these needs are even more crucial: regular food, drink, and sleep are necessary for their physical and mental growth. A child's focus, memory, and emotional regulation can all be negatively impacted by hunger, which has a direct effect on behaviour and learning in early childhood settings (TheBritishNutritionFoundation,2025). Eric Suni (2025) suggests that lack of sleep can lead to irritability, short attention spans, and less resilience to challenges. To try and lessen difficulties, schools and early childhood institutions implement breakfast clubs, quiet rooms, drinking water taps, and play and movement time (GOV.uk, 2025).

Safety and security needs- Safety and security needs are placed at the second level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For children this relates to having safe connections, routines, stress-free surroundings, and protection from harm (simply psychology, 2025). John Bowlby's attachment theory suggests young children's sense of security is greatly influenced by their parents and carers. It shows that dependable, attentive care establishes a safe basis where children feel comfortable and are eager to explore, and provides evidence for this (simply psychology, 2025). (BirthtoSmallers, nd) state that in early childhood settings, the key-person approach, clear boundaries, and regular routines all contribute to children feeling secure and less nervous.
Children may show signs of feeling fear, anxiety, or overreacting when their demands for safety are not met. They can have trouble focusing, find it difficult to leave carers, or be reluctant to try new things (NHS, 2023). Professionals may identify these behaviours as protective reactions rather than misbehaviour by applying Maslow's theory. When their needs for safety are satisfied, children can build relationships, try new things through play, and develop essential emotional resilience (GOV.uk, 2025).

Maslow's theory is significant because it highlights the connections between children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive requirements (Maslow 1954). It helps practitioners understand conduct from a comprehensive perspective rather than focussing solely on academic development (simply psychology, 2025). Sarah E. Burleson and Andrew C. Thoron (2014) suggests that the hierarchy emphasises the strong relationship between learning and well-being as well as the ways in which unmet needs can obstruct higher level growth.Critics argue that the hierarchy may not always be linear and that children may show strengths in some areas even when other demands are not met (Freund & Lous, 2012). Despite these objections, Johanna Lundqvist (2022) suggests the method is helpful for early childhood education since it encourages teachers to consider the whole child. It encourages inclusive practices, child-centered approaches, and policies that address children's basic and emotional needs in addition to learning objectives.

1016 words

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Task 2- Explore in depth the concept of holistic child development with links to Maslow's model (1000 words)

Holistic approaches to child development sees children as individuals with their development including physical, cognitive, emotional, social and moral. Instead of seeing learning or development via a single lens, such as academic success, this approach proposes that various interactions can have an impact on a child's potential and well-being. (HEI schools, 2022).

Maslow's Physiological Needs relating to physical development

At the base of Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1954) is physiological needs, these are the need for food, water, sleep, shelter, and general wellbeing. These are so important for a child's development. Berk, 2013 suggests that Physical development includes brain development, motor abilities, growth, and general health. A child's ability to learn and grow suffers greatly if their basic physiological demands are not constantly met. (Early Years TV, 2025).

A Holistic approach acknowledges physiological needs for child development as they suggest that their physical needs must be met constantly before higher-level cognitive and social skills can develop (Birth to 5 matters,nd). Keeping physically active supports and promotes cognitive skills and neurological development, demonstrating the connection between a child's overall developmental pathway and physical health (PMC, 2015). Therefore the biological and physical elements of holistic development closely correspond with Maslow's physiological level.

Maslow's Safety Needs relating to Safety, Emotional and Security

Maslow's second level is safety needs, which includes emotional stability, routine, and protection from danger (Maslow, 1954). Having a stable emotional environment is crucial for a child to develop resilience, self-control, and attachment in a holistic approach. Children can explore, take chances, and interact with the world without fear in a stable and supportive environment (Simply psychology, 2025).

A child that faces ongoing stress, unstable or inconsistent care more commonly have higher stress responses which can affect negatively on their behaviour and brain development (Nationwide Children's, 2025). They might be less able to concentrate, build connections, and control their emotions. On the other hand, the Mental Health

Foundation (2016) suggests that secure relationships support children's growth in independence, trust, and emotional intelligence.

Emotional wellbeing is closely linked to education in holistic development. Children are more confident, curious, and willing to engage in more complex types of learning and social interaction when they feel both physically and emotionally safe. Therefore, the emotional and psychological aspects of holistic development are directly supported by Maslow's level of safety. (GOV.UK, 2024).

Maslow’s third level of Love and Belonging

Maslow's third level is love, and belonging. A holistic approach suggests that social connections are essential for building an identity and learning To fulfill their emotional and social needs. Children require relationships based on compassion and understanding (The National Strategies Early Years, 2005).

Through interactions with their peers, children develop empathy, understand social norms, and establish their positions within groups. (Eden Academy, 2025). Brooks and Kirk (2024) suggests that children who feel appreciated are more likely to take part in activities, be resilient, and solve problems.This supports Maslow's theory that social belonging is an essential developmental need.

Maslow’s Esteem Needs and direct link to Cognitive Development

Maslow's next level is focused on self-esteem and directly links to cognitive development. Memory, language, reasoning, problem-solving, and creativity are all aspects of cognitive development (Verywellmind, 2025). For children to fully engage in activities in an educational setting they need to feel capable and recognised. To be able to encourage cognitive development, holistic child development focuses on structure, real world experiences and introducing challenges. Providing children with the chance to be independent and receive constructive criticism increases their motivation and self-confidence. (Shamimas workshops, 2025).

When their esteem requirements are met, children are more inclined to approach tasks with confidence, determination, and a willingness to take risks. NIH, (2012) suggests that cognitive development in learning environments is highly dependent on emotional and social support, this is demonstrated when children who feel not good enough and underappreciated avoid difficulties.

Maslow’s Self-Actualisation

Self-actualization, creativity, and problem-solving skills, is the top of Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1954). This level is associated with moral thinking, creativity, individuality, and following individual passions. Early years TV (2025) suggest that the development of moral values, creativity, curiosity, and independent thought are all components of children's self-actualization. Critical thinking, problem-solving, artistic creativity, and free play are all encouraged by holistic development approaches. Teachers using a holistic approach create environments where children can explore, engage with a variety of peers with different lifestyles and perspectives, and express their own views without worrying about being judged.(Holistic Creativity Framework, 2024)

Conclusion

There is a strong cognitive connection between holistic child development and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which emphasizes helping the child as a whole. Maslow's hierarchy is an organized technique that explores how children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and creative needs interact and how fulfilling these needs is essential to their development. Teachers and carers can establish nurturing, stimulating environments that promote resilience, curiosity, creativity, empathy, and a strong sense of identity by using holistic ideas and Maslow's hierarchy (Research Gate, 2025). In conclusion this emphasises that a child's potential is best achieved when their growth is encouraged in all areas, not just academically, but as entire, multifaceted human beings.

867 words

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Three examples from early years practise to highlight Maslow's significance in understanding child development (1000 words)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is one of the key theories for understanding human motivation and development (Maslow, 1954). It provides a way to track and analyze a child's growth in early childhood education, identifying any learning difficulties or developmental disabilities early on, logging any behaviors, and creating nurturing environments (Developmental D A, 2025). Maslow states that until children's basic physiological, safety, love/belonging, and esteem needs are met, they cannot progress towards the top of the pyramid which is self-actualization. Unfulfilled needs in one area may have a substantial impact on advancement in other areas (MedicalNewsToday, 2025).

The Importance of Nutrition and Rest in Early Years Settings

Meeting physiological needs is so important for child development. Maslow's hierarchy also suggests the importance of nutrition and rest in early years settings. It has been made clear that some children become uncomfortable, hungry or exhausted through lack of proper nutrition and sleep or down time (simply psychology, 2025). I have witnessed this through morning times in an early years setting where a normally fit and active young child has struggled to follow basic instructions and become visibly upset over small problems. The reason for this type of behaviour was due to the child not having breakfast prior to attending and didn't get enough sleep the previous night. Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that physiological demands such as food, warmth, water, and rest are the basics and the base level for all other ways of learning and development. Children cannot completely access higher-level cognitive functions like focus, memory, or reasoning when these needs are not met (webMD, 2024).

To be able to meet this need, early years settings offer quiet areas, varying start times and breakfast clubs. Sciencedirect (2025) suggests that a child's actions and behavior usually improves once their physiological demands are satisfied, they respond better to requests, are more cooperative, aware and are more willing to join in with play-based learning. Practitioners working with early years understand that unfulfilled basic needs are the cause of misbehavior and exhaustion. It is suggested that sleep and nutrition have a significant impact on children's cognitive and emotional development (NIH,2022). Maslow's idea promotes putting basic needs before meeting academic needs. This supports the idea that learning cannot be done successfully without taking care of physical health (Education Scotland, nd)

Building Trusting Relationships Through the Key Person approach

Establishing trusting relationships through supporting safety and emotional security is another example of how Maslow's hierarchy supports child development (Maslow, 1954). In early years setting having a child suffering from separation anxiety is very delicate to manage as it could be the result of an unfamiliar environment and not recognising staff members. Child B used to cry at changes, cling to their parents upon arrival, and stay away from other children. Child B struggled to play, explore, and learn as they didn't feel emotionally safe.

John Bowlby's attachment theory, emphasises the value of secure bonds between children and carers, and had an impact on Elinor Goldschmied and Sonia Jackson who created the key person approach (Nursery Story, 2023). The key person approach offers a reliable adult who establishes a safe and trustworthy bond with the child. I put this method into practice when welcoming children in, I was able to offer comfort, explain routines, and be their emotional support during activities. The toddler eventually starts to feel secure and self-assured in the setting. (Nursery Story, 2023). This is similar to Maslow's idea that higher-level needs, such as belonging and esteem, cannot be met until safety is satisfied.

Once a child feels safe in the environment and with their peers, early years practitioners see a better play engagement, willing to try new things and improved social connections (birthto5matters, nd). Simply psychology, (2025) suggests that dealing with children's safety needs helps with development. This is demonstrated through behavioural changes, such as reduced anxiety, fewer outbursts, and improved resilience. Maslow's hierarchy helps staff understand the importance of emotional security and the negative impact of putting academic learning above emotional needs.

Encouraging Confidence and Identity Through Play

Maslow's levels of esteem and love/belonging in early childhood education is so important for encouraging confidence and social identity through play. A child that is reluctant to play with peers, avoids eye contact, watches from a distance and shows signs of rejection could be suffering from loneliness, social anxiety or low self esteem according to Maslow's idea (simply psychology, 2025).Not feeling like they belong, which is a crucial human need, could be the reason they are showing these visible signs. In early years setting many practitioners create inclusive environments to help children who are struggling to feel that they belong (Early Childhood Matters, 2008).

By using child led play I was able to support child C to be included with their peers. Child C enjoys playing with lego blocks, so I began by doing a small group activity focusing on using blocks, inviting peers to join in with gentle encouragement. By offering

chances for constructive peer relationships and shared success, I was able to help child C develop skills and a sense of belonging (NIH, 2022). Child C confidence increased when they start to have positive interactions. This supports Vygotsky's theory that social connection is crucial for social and cognitive growth (simply psychology, 2025). Maslow's hierarchy can help early childhood practitioners to better understand the significance of social and emotional needs for academic performance. Children who are accepted by others are more driven, resilient, and focused(psychology writing, 2025).

Conclusion

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is crucial to understanding child development as these first hand examples have demonstrated. When a child's psychological needs are met they are more in control of their emotions and are able to concentrate on learning. Having key person relationships are really essential as they offer safety, emotional stability as well as encouraging social connections (openanursery, nd). By applying Maslow's theory to understand the reasons for behaviours, early years staff can effectively and manage the children's needs.

In conclusion, Maslow's theory supports early childhood education. Children learn best when they feel protected, supported, nourished, and valued. By addressing every level of need, practitioners help children reach self-actualization, which allows them to express their creativity, become independent, and develop into enthusiastic learners (North East Sight Matters, 2025).

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1067 words

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