

Part 1- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualisation- when a child reaches this level of need then it means they have everything important in place and can focus on being a happy, healthy child. They can develop their creativity by responding to what they see, hear feel and experience. Teachers can encourage children to develop their creativity by supplying them with different materials to explore and giving them the resources for endless possibilities. They should also sit back and allow the child space and time to explore. This is important because a child's creativity builds powerful connections inside the brain, it builds independence and focus (Department for education, 2022). A child's brain develops instant by instant as they interact with the world around them. In the first years of a child's life millions of connections are formed inside the brain. A child's experiences in their early development will form the grounds of their future health, learning and behaviour throughout their lives. For children to be able to develop as they should, Maslow's needs must be met in order to nourish the child's developing brain. If children miss out on the steps they need to develop, then they become deprived of stimulations that their brains need to thrive (unicef).



Ego – This is a child's need for power and control. At this stage a toddler starts to understand their wants and needs, they can often become difficult to teach at this age and it is important that teachers acknowledge what a child wants to do and if safe, give them the power to do it. This helps to boost a child's confidence and enhances their independence. Children want to feel like they have some power over their lives. That is why it is important to offer children choices and give them the power to play freely. Children need to feel recognised when they have done well. If a child was to feel unrecognised, they may feel sad, angry or feel like they have failed (Wilding, 2021). Having a good self-esteem is an important part of creating a healthy mind for children. It helps them to feel good about themselves and helps them to get through hard times in their lives. A low self-esteem can be caused by being labelled as 'naughty', being put under pressure and told off for not doing schoolwork. A low self-esteem can cause a child to feel upset and struggle to fit in (YOUNGMINDS, 2021).

(Herrity, 2024)

Social- Love and affection are an important part of a child's brain development. According to the Welsh Government, feeling the love from parents or care givers can help a child to feel confident and safe and enables them to regulate their feelings. Some children have a hard life and crave that love and attention. It is important that all children are included and given the same level of love and attention from teachers. John Bowlby's theory of attachment believes that a child's emotional health and relationships are shaped by their relationships with their primary caregivers as infants (main 2023). Children also require a sense of belonging this is when they feel included, valued and accepted. Children like to feel that they are important to family, friends and to their classroom. It is important that children feel like they belong because it shapes their self-worth and happiness. It also determines how children form relationships and gives them a secure foundation to develop (The MIND 24/7 Team). It is important that all children are included, treated fairly and with respect. However, it is important to understand that every child is unique. By putting the children first, it motivates them to learn and take part in activities (Learning Journals 2011).

Safety - The next need is safety. Children need to feel safe, have a roof over their heads and they also need stability in their lives. A child needs to have consistency, in their lives, they need to know that someone will be there to pick them up from school every day. If a child has an instable life, then they may find it difficult to achieve their full potential, make friends or trust their caregivers. Being unstable could make it harder for children to form relationships (Compass Fostering 2024). All settings that work with children must have a safeguarding policy in order to keep the children in their care safe from adults or other children that pose a risk to their safety (NSPCC). Safeguarding also prevents children coming from harm by ensuring doors and gates are locked and hazardous supplies are put out of reach of children. If a child was to leave the building unsupervised, they could be injured by a car or taken by someone they do not know. Bronfenbrenner believed that a child's environment impacts their development (Early Years Tv). If a child had poor living conditions and did not feel safe with their family, then it could have a negative impact on their development and could also cause behavioural issues.

Physiological - The Physiological needs are the child's basic needs. These are healthy foods, water, air, sleep and good health. Maslow believed that their physiological needs where the most important because without the basic level of survival a person cannot access a higher level of achievements (Willingham 2023). Children need access to adequate health care to ensure they are fit and health, this also enables them to function well and develop correctly. Children also need a balanced healthy diet to ensure they can move up to the next step in Maslow's hierarchy. Without food it would be hard for a child to concentrate at school as they're stomach would be rumbling, and they would find it hard to think of anything other than food (Hopper 2024). According to the government [hereafter Gov.uk] (2024), they have brought in a breakfast club program to ensure children start their days off right with a full stomach, which increases their concertation, readiness to learn and improves their behaviour and wellbeing. Without adequate basic needs a child would not be able to move up to the next need. The united nation conventions of the rights of the child states in article 6 that every child has the right to life (UNCRC).

Part 2 –

Concept of Holistic Child Development

Introduction

Holistic development is recognising that each child learns and develops individually, how they learn and develop depends on their individual circumstances. Even children from the same family will have different factors in their lives that cause them to experience life differently to their siblings. Holistic child development is where every area of development, learning and growth are brought together and looked at as a whole (Scottish social services council, no date). There are different aspects of holistic child development, their physical development, emotional and social development, intellectual development and wellbeing (Brodie, Pg2, 2018). Fredrick Froebel believed that the child's development should be recognised as a whole (Early education 2021).

Physical development

To understand the concept of Holistic child development it is important to consider a child's growth and physical development. This is the growth of both the brain and body of the child. A child's growth relies a lot on their nutritional intake, this is the food they eat and how much food they eat, which clearly has an effect on their height and weight (Kennan and Evans, 2009, p.93). Without proper nutrition a child's brain development could be affected because nerve cells may not be able to connect, making learning harder for them in the future. Maslow (1943) states that a child's nutritional intake is a physiological need and that these are greater than any other need. Physical development includes a Child's fine and gross motor skills, the fine motor skills are the smaller muscles and their hand- eye coordination. They need these skills for learning how to feed themselves with a spoon. Being able to hold a spoon and feed themselves, the baby will gain independence and self-confidence. While the gross motor skills involve the bigger muscles which control the larger movements (Early movers, no date). Children need their gross motor skills to develop their milestones, these include, rolling, sitting up, crawling and walking, these are essential to developing a baby's independence and self-confidence. Each

child will develop milestones at different times as every child is an individual. Physical development is also a physiological need as without proper physical development a child may become dependent on care givers and lack self-esteem.

Relationships

Practitioners must also consider positive relationships when exploring the concept of holistic child development. Children need to build positive relationships with their care givers in order to thrive and become independent. Positive relationships are developed by having a supportive key person who supports the child's independence and efforts, having someone who is sensitive, warm and loving, and who responds well to the child's needs, interests and feelings (Buckinghamshire council, no date). Positive relationships with children are key to helping them feel safe and cared for. It is important that children form a close and trusting relationship with their key person in a setting, their key person must also make sure that their learning is personalised to meet their individual needs (Buckinghamshire council, no date). Positive relationships are important to holistic child development because children with positive attachments with their carers develop a sense of belonging and feel as though they are worthy of being loved. The Welsh curriculum for non-maintained settings talks about belonging as being one of the main developmental pathways, these were developed to ensure children could develop at their own pace. This also relates to Maslow as it recognises the needs of the child. Positive relationships are important for a child's healthy development. Children who have positive attachments are more able to control their feelings and behaviours (Lavis 2016). Maslow states that a child's need for positive relationships comes under their social needs and in order for a child to create positive relationships their physiological and safety needs must be satisfied. Bowlby (1968, Pg177) believes that children who are loved create a stronger attachment, he states that if a care giver is in reach the child feels safe.

Creativity

Practitioners must also consider a child's creativity when exploring the concept of holistic child development. Creativity refers to allowing children to explore their emotions and express themselves. Role play is a great way for children to be

creative, they are able to stimulate the brain through pretend play, that could be copying what they have seen by playing shops or dollies. Creativity is important to holistic child development because it stimulates their social, emotional and cognitive development. By creating role play scenarios or drawing, children are problem solving, expressing themselves and enabling themselves to experiment with materials, which are all key skills for lifelong learning (Early years company 2024). The Welsh curriculum for non-maintained settings talks about the enabling adult. This states that practitioners should support and encourage children to be curious and to observe as they play. They should also support their choices and decisions by allowing them to play their own way, this will create independence and develop imagination. Children should be encouraged to take risks safely and challenge themselves in order to build confidence, resilience and independence (A Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings 2022). Play is an important part of a child's creativity, through play they are able to develop their self-esteem, communication and confidence. By playing they are able to make sense of their world and build their curiosity and develop their imaginations (My first five years, 2023). This links to Maslow (1943) because Maslow states that by being able to be creative, develop and grow a child has all of their other needs in place and is able to hit self-actualisation and is free to be a child.

In summary the Physical development relates to Maslow because a child needs a good healthy diet in order to move up the hierarchy of needs and without proper physical development a child may become dependent on care givers and lack self-esteem. Positive relationships relate to Maslow because he states children need love and belonging to reach self-esteem and power. And creativity relates to Maslow because this is the highest tier on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and shows that the child has reached full potential.

Part 3

Maslow's significance in understanding child development

Mealtimes in the setting

A practitioner's role during mealtimes would be ensuring that children get healthy nutritious meals. Maslow (1943) states that children need a regular, healthy, balanced diet as part of their basic needs, without food a child may not be able to concentrate and learn to their full potential as they will be too busy thinking about lunch time. Without food it is unlikely a child would be able to reach their full potential. Practitioners must also ensure that the proper food hygiene policies are in place and that children's dietary requirements are considered for every meal. This is important because it ensures that the food given to the children is safe and would not cause them any harm. This would also come under Maslow's physiological needs, as good hygiene and health are a basic need that children need in order to reach their full potential. As stated in article 24 of the (UNCRC) "Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy." Mealtimes are important as children are able to develop their social skills by sitting with friends and talking together, this helps to create positive social behaviours and helps children to feel like they belong and are included. This links to Maslow (1943) as he states that children have the need for belonging and inclusion and need it in order for them to go higher and reach their full potential. The Reggio Emilia approach considers mealtimes important as children should be sitting together on child sized tables, chatting and helping to prepare the food as well as learning about the foods that they are eating (Berg, 2024). Mealtimes are also good for helping children to learn about cultural celebrations. In Wales they eat cawl and Welsh cakes on St Davids day, therefore having these meals on St Davids day will help children to associate those meals with that cultural day.

Understanding the importance of Outdoor play and experiences

being outdoors is important for child development, children enjoy being outdoors in the fresh air and outdoor play links to Maslow (1943) as he states that air is a basic need, and that children cannot live without it. Being outdoors is important to a child's physical development, the curriculum for funded non-maintained settings (2022) states that children have a need to move as part of their development, the more a child is able to be outdoors the more refined and smooth their motor movements and coordination will become. Being outdoors helps children to develop their gross and fine motor skills, by having a bigger area for them to run, jump and climb they will be using their motor skills without trying, this type of physical activity is necessary for a child's healthy growth (Turner, 2024). Being outdoors is important for building positive relationships with other children through social interaction. By playing and making up games children will be communicating with one another, this is important because it helps to form healthy and strong relationships with other children and also with their environment (Turner, 2024). Outdoor play and experiences are important to help children with their communication. Children learn best by doing and observing, by being outdoors and seeing things up close and personal then it makes it easier for children to associate words with objects. Seeing a butterfly in real life is better than seeing a picture of a butterfly (Trichilo, 2020). By exploring the outdoors it enables a child's creativity, outdoors there are open ended resources, one resource can be used as lots of things. A stick can be a wand, a fishing rod or a sword. Froebel stressed that the best way for a child to experience nature is to be outdoors playing in the garden and in their environment. He also stated that children should experience every aspect of nature and not just animals and plants (Froebel trust, no date). Being outdoors links to a lot of what Maslow (1943) talks about in his hierarchy of needs. He states a child needs air as a basic need, he also states children have a need for self-esteem and to feel in control. Being outdoors provides a feeling of control for children as they are able to make their own choices. Maslow (1943) also states that if a child reaches creativity, then they have reached their full potential.

Creating a safe and welcoming environment for children to settling in

Practitioners can create a safe and welcoming environment for children to settle into a setting by talking to them in a language they are comfortable with. If a child speaks Welsh at home, then they would feel more comfortable speaking Welsh in the setting, and it would make it easier for the child to settle in. Having good communication with parents is important and could be done by creating one-page profiles, this helps to settle a child into the setting by enabling the practitioner to find out a child's likes and dislikes (Carmarthenshire county council, 2019). This will make it easier for practitioners to create activities that the child is interested in, which will help the child to feel welcome and create a sense of belonging. The curriculum for non-maintained funded settings (2022) states that communication is one of the five developmental pathways and should be considered holistically as part of a child's development. Allowing a child to bring in a comforter would help them to settle in by giving them something from home that they are comfortable with would help them to feel safe (Essential Parent, 2019). This would be a basic need for a child as it is something they need in order to sleep, and sleep is one of Maslow's Physiological needs.

Conclusion

Maslow is significant to early years practice because in order for children to reach their full potential they need to have fresh air and good health, and they can achieve this by being outdoors. They need to feel safe by allowing them to bring in comforters to help them settle and sleep. And that children have a need for belonging and inclusion and they can do this by forming positive relationships by being social at mealtimes and by playing outdoors.

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