

Cover sheet- Sophie Brewer

For this assessment I have submitted the following:

- Component 1- Infographic.
- Component 2- Holistic development with links to Maslow's model and other theories.
- Component 3- Three examples to highlight Maslow's significance.

I have not used AI during this assessment.

Component 1- Infographic

“Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid.” (McLeod, 2025, p. 4). This explains that Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests that human motivation is structured in five different stages, from basic needs to higher needs. This theory emphasises that each level of the pyramid must be met before moving onto the next, starting from the bottom and working its way to the top, which promotes personal growth in each individual (Research History, 2012).

Physiological needs- Maslow believed that an individual’s physiological needs are the most basic and essential needs for human survival. These include things such as food, water, air, clothing, sleep, etc., and without these needs being met, he argues that an individual cannot progress to higher levels of motivation. In Maslow’s pyramid, he explains that one’s physiological needs act as the base of his hierarchy. Which emphasises that “once an individual’s physiological needs are satisfied, the need for security and safety becomes salient” (McLeod, 2025, p. 3). Once these needs are met, individuals can begin to focus on the next stages within the hierarchy. He believed that this foundation stage is crucial in life, as it creates stability and allows a person to then work towards safety, belonging, self-esteem and eventually self-actualisation, and without meeting the basics, individuals cannot progress to higher levels of development (McLeod, 2025).

Safety needs- McLeod (2025, p. 3) states that “safety needs involve predictability, order, and control. These include job security, health, financial security, and freedom from harm.” According to Maslow’s hierarchy, once an individual’s physiological needs have been met, the need for safety comes next in a person’s priorities. Safety needs focus on creating a sense of stability and protection which allows individuals to feel safe in the present and the future and can also be emotional as well as physical. It also could mean different things for a child and adult or depending on where a person is in life. For a child, the sense of safety could mean feeling warmth and love from their home, or for an adult, it could mean feeling safe and secure in their job. Once these safety needs are met, individuals can progress onto the next step of the hierarchy by focusing on their belonging/social needs (Poston, 2009).

Belonging/social needs- An individual’s belonging/social needs include friendship, families, and romantic relationships, and feeling a sense of belonging is essential for a person’s psychological well-being. This then becomes a priority once an individual’s physiological and safety needs have been met. A person’s belonging/social needs are important as they help individual’s feel accepted and supported by the people around them, this then has a knock-on effect on people’s sense of security and happiness, which creates strong and positive relationships around them. Without individual’s feeling a sense of belonging, it can have an impact on their psychological well-being and cause loneliness or isolation (McLeod, 2025). Feeling a sense of belonging all depends on where he/she is in life. A child needs to feel a connection with their parents, then when becoming a teenager, it is likely they will want to feel more of a connection with their friendship groups, and as they progress into adulthood, individual’s often turn to their romantic relationships to feel a sense of belonging (Poston, 2009). Once these belonging/social needs have been met, it allows individuals to move onto the next level of the hierarchy, which is their self-esteem needs.

Self-esteem needs- According to Maslow's hierarchy, these needs are the fourth to be met after meeting the belonging/social needs. "Esteem needs include self-respect, achievement, and recognition from others" (McLeod, 2025, p. 5). Which explains that these needs relate to when a person feels valued by others and confident and capable within themselves. When an individual is acknowledged for their efforts, it allows their own abilities to be strengthened, which pushes their self-esteem needs to improve. Maslow's hierarchy also believes that there is a lower form of self-esteem needs, which relates to a person's ego, and a higher form of self-esteem needs, which relates to a person's self-respect. This means that when an individual has low self-esteem, it often comes down to not believing in themselves, and equally, when a person has high self-esteem, it can mean that they have confidence in their abilities. However, if these needs are not met, it can cause individuals to experience a lack of motivation and low confidence (Poston, 2009). Therefore, it is very important to meet these needs, as it allows individuals to progress onto the highest level of the hierarchy, which is self-actualisation.

Self-actualisation- Self-actualisation is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy and relates to a person reaching their full potential. During this stage of the hierarchy, is when individual's focus on their own personal growth and becoming the best version of themselves. By being self-actualised, it allows a person to feel fulfilment and meaning from their goals, which could include developing new skills or problem-solving. It can also mean using their own inspiration and challenges to develop their interests and exploration. Once an individual has reached this level of the hierarchy, it allows them to experience a strong sense of purpose and self-satisfaction, and he believed that these needs can only be met once all the previous needs have been met. As a result of meeting these needs, people often feel more independent and motivated (Perera, 2024).

Overall, Maslow's hierarchy of needs emphasises each stage of human development and how it builds on the one before. He believes that individuals must meet basic needs before moving onto their higher needs. Physiological and safety needs are considered basic human needs, and once these needs are met, humans are then able to form more meaningful relationships and develop their confidence. This then fulfils their belonging/social and self-esteem needs, which are considered psychological needs. Which then allows us to progress onto developing our self-actualisation needs, which are considered self-fulfilment needs (McLeod, 2025). To conclude, Maslow's theory highlights that when individuals feel valued and secure, they are more likely to reach their full potential.

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Component 2- Holistic development with links to Maslow's model and other theories

According to Care Learning (2024), "holistic development refers to an approach in child development that focuses on all areas of a child's growth and progress." This refers to looking at the child as a whole and making sure every aspect of their development is supported rather than concentrating on one part of their ability. Holistic development connects a child's physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication development and recognises that when one pathway develops, it can also influence the other pathways to progress at the same time. It emphasises the importance of seeing the child as an individual and recognises that learning and development can happen when all the areas are working together (Bresler, Latta and Beattie, 2007).

Using a holistic approach in an early-year setting encourages us as practitioners to consider the child's overall learning and development. We can encourage this by assessing the environment and ensuring the children have positive relationships with the adults and children around them that can also influence their development and effective learning outcomes. This allows practitioners to create a safe and nurturing setting for the children, which can then lead to a more meaningful day in nursery/school so that the children feel supported as individuals (Parenta, 2021). When taking a holistic approach, it can support the children in building confidence and allowing their developmental pathways to grow in an educational setting and outdoors. It is very important to use holistic development in a childcare setting, as it ensures that us as practitioners are recognising each individual need of the child and responding to each child uniquely. It also allows for early intervention if necessary and support when needed to benefit the child's long-term development (Fulton, 2019).

Child development often refers to the way children grow and learn, covering all aspects of their life. It means their development as a whole, including their physical strengths, emotional state, social skills, developing their language and cognitive development (Berk, 2015). When looking at the child as a whole, you can understand how each area of their development connects with each other and

pushes each one another along to develop together and how each aspect is as equally important as the other. By taking the holistic approach, you consider the child's relationships, the environment around them and each of their individual needs. This then supports the child in developing their confidence, capability, and independence, whilst we as practitioners are supporting their well-being and emotions all together (Lindon and Brodie, 2025).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that humans are motivated in a pattern of five stages, starting with the basic needs and reaching to the higher needs. His model states that every need must build on each other before progressing onto the next to achieve personal growth (Research History, 2012). This can be linked closely with holistic development, as it refers to supporting and connecting each aspect of a child's physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication development. Therefore, they both focus on supporting the whole child rather than just one area. As Maslow's hierarchy explains, an individual must meet safety and belonging needs before fully developing their confidence and self-actualisation needs. By connecting Maslow's model with a holistic approach, we as practitioners can have a much clearer understanding of the child and ensure that every aspect of the child is in focus. We would be able to understand that if one area of the child's development is limited, other areas may not be able to progress as well as they should. This will then ensure that all settings are creating strong and nurturing environments for the children by making sure they are cared for, have a strong routine and are allowed to take risks and build strong relationships (Kurt, 2020).

Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs and holistic development have strong connections, some may argue that they do not connect in the slightest. One issue that could be raised is that for children to thrive and grow, they do not need to follow a strict routine like Maslow suggests, as some children learn more efficiently when working on more than one thing at a time. It may also be argued that every child is different, which means that what works for one child to feel secure and confident in a situation may not work for another child. By assuming every child is the same, it could then end up complicating a child's development, as we would assume that all children develop in the same five stages (SPP Teams, 2025).

Similarly to Maslow's model, the Montessori theory also has connections to holistic development. The Montessori theory focuses on a child-centred approach and emphasises how children learn through different experiences such as exploring, independent choices and meaningful activities. Maria Montessori strongly believed that children should be confident and capable learners who learn from choosing their own tasks to match their own developmental stage (Ruhl, 2024). It then supports holistic development, as it focuses on every aspect of the child, including their physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication development. It also connects, as the theory focuses on children growing in a natural environment, which allows the children to develop relevant skills from hands-on activities whilst learning at their own pace (Webster, 2025).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory also has connections with holistic development. His theory explains that a child's development is shaped by the environment around them, which is based around the types of relationships they engage in and the adults they observe. His theory is based on five different layers, including microsystem, which involves families and schools, mesosystem, which involves connections between microsystems, exosystem, which includes indirect influences, macrosystem, which includes cultural and societal influences and chronosystem, which includes changes over time (Härkönen, 2007). This then links very strongly with holistic development, as it emphasises how children learn and grow through different types of influences. It recognises that a child's development is shaped by an ecological perspective that supports a holistic approach and recognises the child as a whole. Both holistic development and Bronfenbrenner's theory highlight how important every aspect of the child is and to always ensure they are surrounded with supportive and meaningful environments (Guy-Evans, 2025).

Overall, holistic development emphasises the importance of recognising the children as individuals, whilst understanding that their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication needs are all connected. This approach can link closely with theories such as Maslow, Montessori and Bronfenbrenner. When connecting holistic development with these theories, it can ensure practitioners have supportive learning environments for the children to grow into strong and capable learners and allows them to grow when their individual needs are being met.

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Three examples to highlight Maslow's significance

Maslow's hierarchy of needs was created by Abraham Maslow. His hierarchy represents a pyramid of five levels, working from basic human needs and progressing to the higher needs of a human (McLeod, 2025). It starts with humans' survival and safety needs, moving on to belonging and self-esteem needs and then reaches humans' self-actualisation needs. Maslow emphasises that each level of the pyramid must be met before moving onto the next level. He believed that this way of life helps humans recognise a sense of inclusion and have the best learning outcomes possible (Research History, 2012).

Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in early years can be considered very useful, as it can help practitioners gain an understanding that for children to gain meaningful learning experiences, they must have their basic needs met first (Simons, Irwin and Drinnien, 1987). Maslow explains that for children to be able to fully engage, learn and explore, they must have their physiological and safety needs met. To meet these needs in early years, practitioners must ensure they are providing, comfortable environments, healthy snacks/drinks, consistent routines and positive relationships. Practitioners must then move on to meeting children's belonging and self-esteem needs. To do this they must ensure they are providing inclusive and respectful environments, teamwork opportunities, positive feedback and extracurricular activities. After providing the children with all these opportunities, they will then need to be able to meet their self-actualisation needs by giving children the opportunity to explore topics in depth. By using Maslow's model, it encourages practitioners to take a holistic approach at the same time by ensuring the children feel valued and respected. This then allows children to develop their independence, which supports them to be able to reach their full potential (Shah, 2022).

Transitions in early years including a child moving from nursery to primary school or moving through year groups, can highlight the importance of Maslow's hierarchy in understanding child development, as it shows how important it is to meet children's basic needs. Transitions link with Maslow's hierarchy as a child's safety and belonging needs are being disturbed and there are many ways a practitioner can support a child with a transition alongside the parents in early years (Brodie, 2024). This can involve arranging a visit to their new school/classroom to allow them to get

familiar with the environment or allowing the opportunity to talk with the new teacher beforehand to help them feel comfortable. Some believe that the most important thing to do when supporting a child with a transition is to maintain strong communication with the parents to ensure you have the child's best interest and so they can feel secure and comfortable. This can also ensure that you are offering emotional support when and if needed. By carrying out these actions, it makes sure that the child's safety and belonging needs are being met, which Maslow believes are the basic/psychological needs to enable the child to reach the higher expectations. These actions help reassure the parents also as they allow children to engage in activities, gain confidence and improve on their social development. Maslow's model therefore supports practitioners in early years to support children's growth and development (Brooker, 2008).

Another example from early years that can highlight the importance of Maslow's hierarchy in understanding child development is a family change happening in a child's life. This could be a child's behaviour changing in school/nursery due to having a newborn baby at home, and they could then become clingier towards staff as they are not getting as much attention at home or show more frustration and demand more attention (Mackay, 2005). Family change links with Maslow's hierarchy as it can disturb a child's sense of belonging and security, and these are needs that Maslow identifies as essential for a child to progress. There are many ways a practitioner or a teacher can support a child when going through this change, and this can include providing the child with 1-1 time with their key person or the person they feel the most comfortable with, and this can allow them to rebuild emotional security. During this 1-1 time the child could use things around the classroom, like dolls to express how they are feeling, which will help improve their understanding of the change that is happening. Another thing that could support the child during this change is maintaining a consistent routine to provide predictability and ensuring you are communicating openly with the parents. This is important, as the child could be behaving differently at home or in the setting, and this could allow you to gain a deeper understanding of how the child feels and ensure the child is receiving consistent care in both. By carrying out these actions, you can ensure that the child's belonging and security needs are being met, and it can allow the child to

feel reassured. Overall, Maslow's hierarchy can support a child in going through life changes (Zang et al., 2023).

A child losing confidence with a task after having difficulty with it could also highlight the importance of Maslow's hierarchy in understanding child development, as it shows a child's self-esteem needs must be met for the child to have confidence in themselves. This scenario could include a child comparing themselves to another during a task, and when discovering the other child is more advanced, their confidence level drops. This links with Maslow's model, as it is related to a child's self-esteem needs, and Maslow believes that when a child compares themselves to another child, it can affect their motivation. During these activities, practitioners could assist the children by providing more achievable steps to rebuild the child's confidence and sense of capability. During these smaller steps, offering specific praises to the children could also help to boost the child's confidence. Another thing that could help boost a child's confidence is creating opportunities in different areas of the classroom for the child to experience success and ensuring the environment celebrates all success and not only academic. This will then support the child's self-esteem needs and encourage the child to become more willing during different tasks, which will ultimately improve their confidence and show resilience (Elias and Arnold, 2006).

To conclude, these examples show how Maslow's hierarchy provides a structure in early years. It recognises that a child's basic needs need to be met so they can fully engage when learning, which offers a holistic approach. By applying Maslow's model when children are experiencing transitions, family changes or changes to their self-esteem, it can help ensure the environment allows the children to reach their full potential.

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