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Human Development (ECEY4001)

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs - Bing
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Physiological needs:

When discussing Maslow's hierarchy of needs the first stage that is considered is the physiological stage. This stage looks at the basic needs of individuals, these being to breathe, eat, drink and sleep, all of which are necessary in order for humans to stay alive. Humans need all of these things not only to ensure survival but also to move on to the further stages of needs, without these a human is unable to focus on any further needs. According to Berk (2018), healthy nutrition plays a key part in the first two years of a child's life because the brain and body are developing at a faster pace. It is important that all of these needs are met because it is biologically necessary for a human to stay alive and to be healthy. If a human is lacking any of these needs, they will naturally feel thirsty, hungry, or tired if these needs are not being met. Also, when these needs are not met, it could potentially lead to a decline in their mental health as well as their physical health and, it could even result in death. Thus, the implications of not meeting these needs could be serious. When these needs are met, it could allow for opportunities to focus on other needs further up the hierarchy, for example they may be able to focus on their academic achievement or career growth. Physiological needs are the foundations of overall human development.

Self-actualisation:

The fifth and final stage of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the self-actualisation stage. Self-actualisation is the realisation of an individual reaching their full potential and abilities, allowing them to be happy. According to Weinberg (2011) it is natural for human beings to aim for self-actualisation. However, this can only be achieved when all other needs as noted above are met. Self-actualisation is when humans feel they are living up to their full potential. This also relates to having a purpose and meaning in their life, and that they are successful in those areas. Once all other stages of needs are met, a person is then able to focus on their dreams and interests, which are unique to every individual. Self-actualisation is important because it is the point of an individual's life where they can be truly happy and live a fulfilled and complete life.

Self-esteem:

The fourth stage of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the self-esteem stage. Once a person feels safe and has built strong relationships, they are then able to think about how they can build their own self-confidence and how they can feel good about themselves. Humans also need their efforts to be validated and acknowledged by others in order for them to feel good about themselves. Having high self-esteem may give someone the confidence to face new challenges and explore various aspects of life. However, if these needs are not met, they may have low self-esteem and feel insecure about themselves, which could prevent them from being happy and achieving their full potential in life. According to Howard, Burton and Levermore (2020) children that have high self-esteem are happy within themselves and are motivated to achieve well in life, however children who have low self-esteem this can often lead to feelings of not being good enough and a lack of motivation to keep achieving. Once self-esteem has been achieved, they will be able to accept who they are and be secure in themselves.

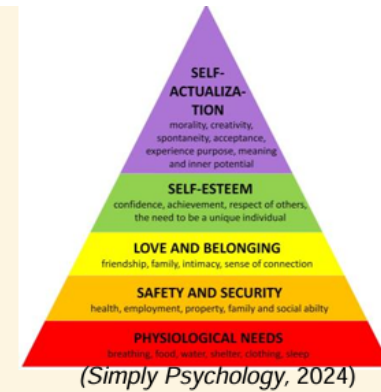
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Safety needs:

The second stage of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the need for safety and security. Once the first stage of a person's needs has been achieved, they are then able to focus on the need for safety and security. Safety and security needs mean ensuring that humans are not subject to consistent physical or psychological harm. An example of these needs being met could be as simple as having a home to live in or being in a safe and stable environment. It is important that safety and security needs are met because, without these, humans may become stressed and may only think of how to feel safe and secure, which could mean they are unable to think about further things they may need, such as relationships or being part of a community. Without basic safety and security needs being met there can be a detrimental effect on mental health and wellbeing and as such the inability to move on to the next stage. Thus, safety and security needs not only prevent stress but allow for the growth of their well-being and can give them opportunities to reach their future goals.

Love and belonging:

The third stage of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the need for love and belonging. Once both stages of physical and safety needs have been met, a human is then able to think about their social needs and building relationships. Love and belonging means to form connections and to be part of a community. An example of meeting these needs could be simply having a family or having friends and This can lead to a person feeling accepted. According to Over (2016) love and belongingness starts with positive social interactions, it is important that love and belonging needs are met because, without these, it could lead to a person feeling lonely and isolated, which in turn could lead to a detrimental impact on their mental health and well-being, and this could prevent them from achieving more and moving forward. Meeting the needs of love and belonging can help a person feel supported and wanted and that they matter. Love and belonging allows a person to share their good times with other people and feel supported by others when they go through hardships, this could lead to personal growth and allow them to focus on further achievements.



(Simply Psychology, 2024)

Part 2 The concept of holistic child development

A concept is a general idea used to understand the meaning of something. The concept of holistic child development explores all areas of development including physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive and intellectual. It considers the importance of addressing each area to ensure a child's overall development in life. All areas of a child's development are interconnected or interlinked, where a child may excel or struggle to develop in one area of development this may have an affect on another area of development. In this essay the topics of relationships, safety, love, and communication will be discussed and how they support and have an affect on a child's holistic development.

To understand the concept of a child's holistic development, it is important to consider positive relationships. Building positive relationships is a crucial part of a child's development and can help them feel loved and supported. Positive relationships are at the very least about supporting, trusting, and respecting one another. There are many examples of positive relationships, and these may be their parents, caregivers, family members, teachers, or friends. Having relationships that are positive is important to holistic child development because a child will desire to be close to family and friends, belong to a society, being part of a community or group and this helps them to develop their social and emotional skills as well as them feeling a valued individual. One of the most influential relationships a child will have in their lifetime is with their primary caregiver as they are responsible for meeting their basic needs from birth, Whitters (2020) emphasises this and builds on Bowlby's attachment theory. Bowlby's attachment theory highlights how caregivers need to bond with the child early on as it can affect their overall development and well-being. Despite this there will be other relationships that are also very influential to children in their early years and beyond and these will be with their peers and educators. Children not only learn from their own relationships, but they also learn from observing other relationships and the interactions around them so it is important to be aware of behaviour around them.

One of the most significant outcomes of having positive long-term relationships early on in life is having good mental health and well-being. When a child is surrounded by relationships that are supportive, nurturing and accepting it encourages further learning and development. Secure and predictable relationships will provide a really important foundation for many aspects of their development. Having positive relationships can often lead to positive experiences for children, as this can help them to regulate their emotions and feelings. Attachment in relationships can make a child feel important as it reflects onto the child that they are loved and that they are important in that person's life. If a child then feels included in things they may then feel that they are important and valued, which can impact on their sense of identity and role in life. Positive relationships are the foundation in creating a sense of community that support mental health and well-being. Relationships help people feel a sense of belonging and connectiveness.

Practitioners must also consider safety when exploring the concept of holistic child development. Ensuring the safety of children allows them to develop in all areas without the fear of being harmed. It is important to provide a safe environment as this builds not only trust but also develops self-confidence for children to truly be themselves. Safety refers to protecting children not only from physical but also psychological harm; by creating safe environments this enables children to learn about risks and in turn feel heard by their carers. Brussoni *et al.* (2012) emphasizes the importance of risky play and how it allows children to assess the safety of their own surroundings but will only feel able to do this if they already feel safe and secure in their environment. It is important that a child feels safe to develop holistically because it encourages them to explore, take risks and helps them build resilience which in turn will promote their physical, emotional, and social development.

Another topic that the practitioner will need to consider when exploring the concept of holistic child development is communication and this is with not only the child but also their carers. Communication refers to the way in which individuals share information and express their needs. This can be verbally by speaking and listening but can also be non-verbal through body language by facial expressions or hand gestures. Providing effective communication can ensure that the child has a positive experience and protects their overall well-being by enabling them to have a voice and to be heard. Having effective communication is important because it will help ensure that the child's needs are more likely to be met as they can express their needs. Without communication it may be hard to understand the child's needs and information could be misinterpreted. It is also important that their carers have effective communication as well because a child may not always understand what their needs are. According to McMahon and Dyer (2018) having clear and effective communication in practice is vital in order to promote good behaviour and encourage learning as well as support a child's emotional and social development.

Part 3 Maslow's Significance in understanding child development

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is significant in understanding child development as his theory explains what an individual's needs are for them to fully develop and succeed in life. It explains how the needs of a child start from the most basic leading onto the more complex needs and the impact that these have on their development and learning. Early years practitioners may be able to use this theory to reflect on their practice and to also understand what they need to provide the children in their care with in order for them to reach their full potential. In this essay three parts of Maslow's hierarchy will be discussed: meeting children's basic needs, creating a safe and stable environment, and helping children build confidence and independence. Each topic will explore the part an early years practitioner has to play in promoting the child's holistic development.

Firstly, understanding the importance of a child's basic needs is crucial in practice as this is to ensure the wellbeing of all those in their care. Brodie (2018) emphasises the importance that children should have access to healthy nutrition, hygiene, and a consistent routine. When working with children the practitioner's role should at the very least include ensuring that children receive nutritious meals and fluids and alongside this they must allow time for rest. It is important for practitioners to understand children's basic needs because if a child is lacking in these needs, they may become unhealthy and in turn unable to develop further thus affecting their health and wellbeing. For example, if children feel tired, they may struggle to function through the day and their energy may be drained or if a child is feeling hungry, this could lead to them being distracted from everyday things and learning. This lack of energy may also affect their ability to form positive relationships with peers and adults around them. As a result of these needs not being met it could prevent them from growing and learning and reaching their full potential. However, if these needs are met fully a child can thrive and move forward to the next stages. This sets a strong foundation for their holistic development.

Creating a safe and stable environment is also important to a child's development and wellbeing. When working with early years all practitioners need to create a safe and stable environment physically and they can do this by ensuring a clean and safe area that is clear of trip hazards and unnecessary clutter. This will prevent the risk of accidents and any harm to the children. Alongside this it is also important that children are supervised at all times during the day to ensure their safety. Children also need emotional stability, consistency, and predictability as this provides the children with emotional security. For example, having a consistent routine means children will know what to expect and this can help them feel secure and safe. On the other side of this changing routines too often could result in not meeting the safety needs of the children and this may be demonstrated through a change in their mood and behaviour. According to Burleson and Thoron (2014) if a child is in an unsafe environment, it can make them feel anxious and in turn disrupt their learning causing them to underperform. Having a safe and stable environment is important to their development

because children are then able to focus on new experiences and learn new things without fear or stress and reach their full potential.

Building confidence and independence is also an important part of a child's development and this is essential for them. Being independent and confident is needed in order for children to transition securely onto the next stages as they develop and grow older. Practitioners can often help the child's development by encouraging them to build on their self-confidence and independence, and this can be done in many ways. An example would be for the practitioner to praise a child when they have achieved something no matter how small that achievement may be. They can also promote confidence and independence by giving the children an opportunity to make their own choices and allowing them to do things by themselves. An example of this could be allowing the child to choose which area they want to play in, or it could be setting them a task or activity to complete without support. Promoting independence and building confidence is important to a child's development because it builds on their self-esteem and they will feel confident enough when they go through transitions, such as moving on to high school. Sadownik (2023) builds on Bronfenbrenner's theory and emphasizes the impact changes and transitions will have on a child's life and how the environment they are surrounded by can affect how a child copes with this. Mukherji and Dryden (2014) agree that transitions can be a struggle but a child who has a high level of confidence is more likely to be able to approach new experiences positively and calmly.

So, in conclusion Maslow's theory is significant to early years practice because it helps practitioners to gain an understanding of what children need to ensure their holistic development. By applying Maslow's theory in practice children will be provided with the right care and support in order for them to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.

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