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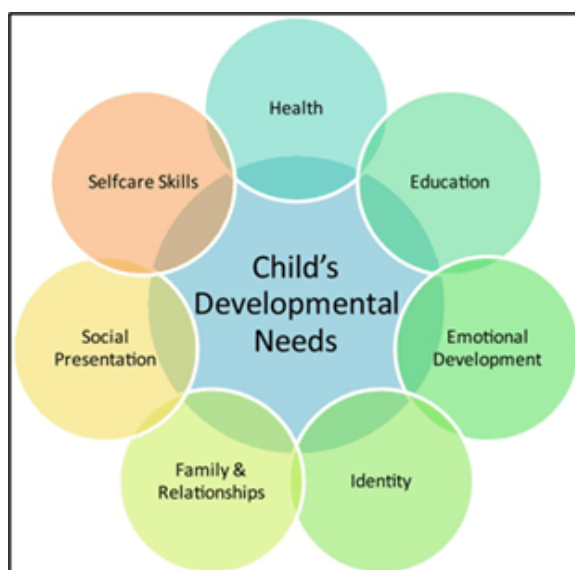
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## Needs and Rights of Children: Needs of Children: Psychological Needs

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India has made significant commitments towards ensuring the basic rights of children. These are the right to survival, right to protection, right to development and right to participation. Presently, infant mortality rate is down, child survival rate is up, literacy rate has improved, and school dropout rate has fallen. Despite these achievements, there are gaps in terms of unmet needs due to which children feel neglected and vulnerable. There is a lot to know about child rights and government initiatives in this regard.

### Needs of Children



During the process of growth and development, children have certain needs like psychological, social, health and educational which need to be timely fulfilled. A need can be defined as something

that is essential for a person to lead a healthy and productive life. One should understand that there is a difference between 'needs' and 'wants'. The latter may be desirable, but they are not essential for an individual. Let us study some of these needs.

## Psychological Needs

- **Security, safety and protection:** Children need to grow up as positive minded, happy, healthy and contributing citizens of the nation. For this, it is essential that they grow up in an environment where they feel physically, psychologically and emotionally safe and secure. This can affect their development, health and learning. Lack of safety may lead to issues of trust and attachment with others. Such children may grow up into socially maladjusted adults.
- **Love and affection:** Every child needs to be loved. The need for love and affection is the foundation for developing healthy relations and establishing trust with others. Children brought up in a caring and loving environment grow up to be confident and socially well-adjusted individuals. On the other hand, children who do not receive such an environment feel lonely, ignored, lack initiative and are withdrawn.
- **Understanding and acceptance:** Understanding and acceptance of the child by the parents and caregivers is another psychological need of children. A feeling of being valued, boosts the confidence of children. Children's understanding about the self is formed on the basis of their daily life experiences and interactions within their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and also the behavior and responses of others. To fulfill the psychological needs of children, caregivers must ensure a safe, secure, loving environment in which they must call them by their names, greet them with a smile, praise and encourage them, and also support them in their day-to-day activities.

## Need of Health and Nutrition

- A healthy and happy childhood is the basis for a stable and strong adulthood. Foundation of good health is laid during the early years of life. Physical health is influenced by many factors, such as biology/genes, and environmental factors like nutrition, immunization, and opportunities for physical activities and exercise.
- Lack of healthy and nutritious food may lead to poor growth and health problems like weakness, illness and diseases. For this they should regularly monitor their child's health and physical development and take necessary measures.

### **Given below are a few guidelines to ensure the health and nutritional needs of children:**

- Age appropriate gain in height and weight indicates normal health of children. Therefore, a monthly or at least a quarterly record of the height and weight of children may be maintained in a growth chart. If a child is losing or not gaining weight, the child should be shown to a doctor. The basic purpose of monitoring growth is to prevent malnutrition.
- Malnutrition occurs if the child does not get the right kind of food, i.e., a balanced diet. Every child must be given a nutritional supplement to avoid nutritional deficiencies in diet.
- Medical check-up of all children is a must at least once a year. It must be ensured that they have received the necessary immunization on time.

## Play, Early Stimulation and Learning Needs

- Play, early stimulation and opportunities for learning are yet another set of needs for the proper development of children. It helps develop imagination, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Through play, children also develop good relationships and learn to care and share. Lack of a stimulating environment and opportunities to learn through play may delay growth and development of children.
- Children must be exposed to an enriching learning environment that provides opportunities for various age-appropriate activities and learning material. Free conservation, storytelling and rhymes contribute immensely in developing language, creativity and imagination which are essential for learning. Similarly, playtime is as important to their development as food and good care.