



Reflection / Darpan

- Do you remember your favourite toy when you were a child?
- What kind of questions did you ask to your parents in your school age?
- Do you think that your childhood experiences affect your attitude, behaviour and emotions?
- Answers to these questions reflects the introspection of your early years of life. It is a wonderful journey of life.

Well! To know more about the Early childhood years, we will focus on the period between 2 to 6 years in detail.

Early childhood starts from two years and ends at six years. In this period rapid changes occur in a child. Children grow taller and stronger. Thinking and language skills develop and they begin to socialize. In the process of socialization various habits and behaviour patterns are developed. Child gradually moves from dependency to independence. According to the eminent psychologists Freud, Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky, early experiences form a strong base for future development.

3.1 Characteristics of Early Childhood

1. Problem age/troublesome age

The children at this stage are often obstinate, stubborn, negative, troublesome and disobedient. They have frequent temper tantrums and suffer from negative feelings such as jealousy. As behaviour problems become more frequent and troublesome during this stage, it is aptly referred to as a 'problem age'.



Picture 3.1 Problem age / troublesome age

2. Toy age

Early childhood is often called as the 'Toy age'. Children prefer to spend much of their waking time playing with toys. Toy play reaches its peak during the early childhood years and then begins to decrease when children reach late childhood. Since significant learning takes place through the active use of educational aids and toys, day care centres provide these keeping in mind the values they offer young children.

Now a days parents commonly give smartphones to children. Children use them to play various games. Excessive use of smart phones may lead to aggression, irritation and eye problems and poor attention span



Picture 3.2 Toy age

3. Pregang age

Early childhood is also known as the 'Pregang age'. Children learn the foundations of their social behaviour in their peer group. It helps them to develop a highly organized social life.

4. Preschool years

Generally parents enrol their children in preschool around the age of 3 years. Educators refer to the early childhood years as the preschool age. Preschool education aims at the overall development of a child. Aspects of development such as physical, motor, cognitive, language, emotional and social are developed in the preschool by providing stimulation varied, experiences and opportunities through play and exploration. Preschool education prepares the child for formal education.

5. Questioning, Exploration and Curiosity age

Children are curious and observant about each and everything in their environment which is new or novel. Children want to know how things work and how they can be a part of it. Children ask a number of questions to their parents, teachers and caregivers and repeatedly ask the question 'Why' during this stage.

6. Imitative age

Children imitate the behaviour, speech and actions of elders, teachers, peers, caregivers.



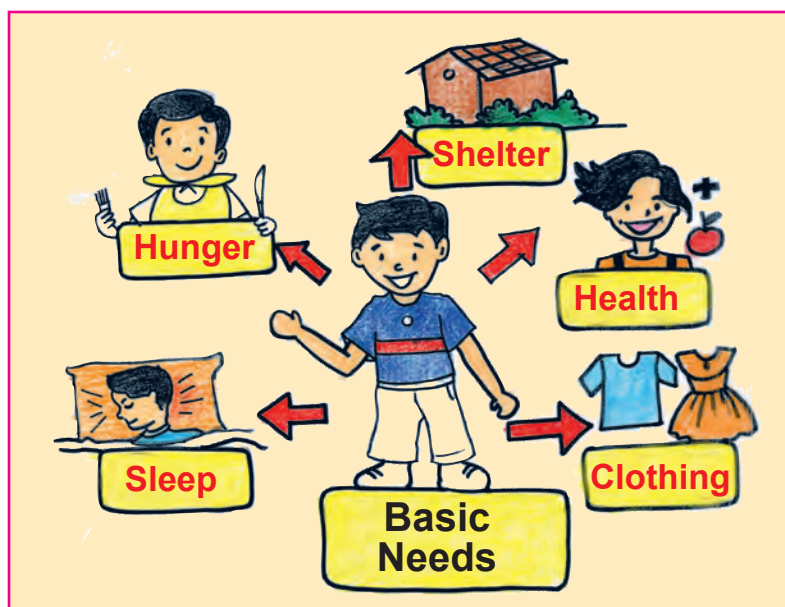
Picture 3.3 Imitative age

3.2 Needs of Children

As given in the first chapter, you have already been introduced to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Let us have a quick recap of the same.

A) Physiological needs

Hunger, thirst, sleep, clothing, shelter and health are the basic physiological needs. It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to provide a roof over their head and adequate food, clothing, shelter and security.



Picture 3.4 Physiological needs

1) Hunger

Hunger plays a very significant role in a child's life. It is considered to be a prime need. A nutritious, balanced, healthy and adequate diet is a necessity of every child. Fulfilment of this need will promote healthy development.

2) Sleep

Children engage in a variety of activities. However, Sleep is very important as it helps to maintain physio-chemical equilibrium and preserve energy for various activities. Sleep is essential for proper growth and development of children.

3) Clothing

Clothes should be selected as per the environmental conditions. Trousers that fit comfortably and have an elastic waist are easier for young children to wear. Bigger buttons are also easier for children to manage. When clothes fit properly and are not too loose or tight, children can move freely and comfortably.

4) Shelter

A stable and adequate shelter plays a major role in the health and wellbeing of families and children. A safe and secure environment in the family affects social and educational aspects of a child.

5) Health

Illness holds back a child's growth. A proper diet, cleanliness and hygienic habits promote good health. Immunization serves as a protection against several diseases so as per the advice of doctors an immunization schedule should be strictly adhered to.

B) Psychosocial Needs

Love and affection, belongingness, acceptance, recreation and play are the psychosocial needs of young children.

1) Love and affection

Love and affection is the basic psychosocial need of children. Children feel rejected and unhappy when they do not get love and affection from the parents. Love, affection and emotional security given by the parents, caregivers and elders develops trust in children.



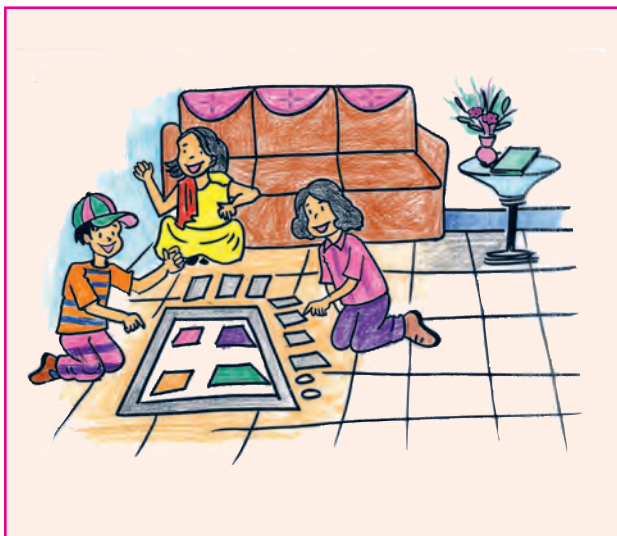
Picture 3.5 Love and affection

2) Acceptance

A Child always tries to catch the attention of elders and others for social approval. Praise and blame is an underlying message of acceptance and rejection. Praise is a kind of reward and blame is a form of punishment. Approval of parents is extremely important. As the child grows older, he/she seeks the approval of his/her age group.

3) Peers

Children's relations with their peers, play a major role in their overall development. They learn various skills with peers e.g. how to communicate, play, express emotions and solve problems. They also learn to share a toy, food and some other objects. Learning these skills help children to make new friends and gain acceptance from them throughout the school age.



Picture 3.6 Peers

3.3 Rights of Children

India is the second largest populated country in the world. According to the Census Report (2011), about one third of the population of the country is below 18 years. The needs of

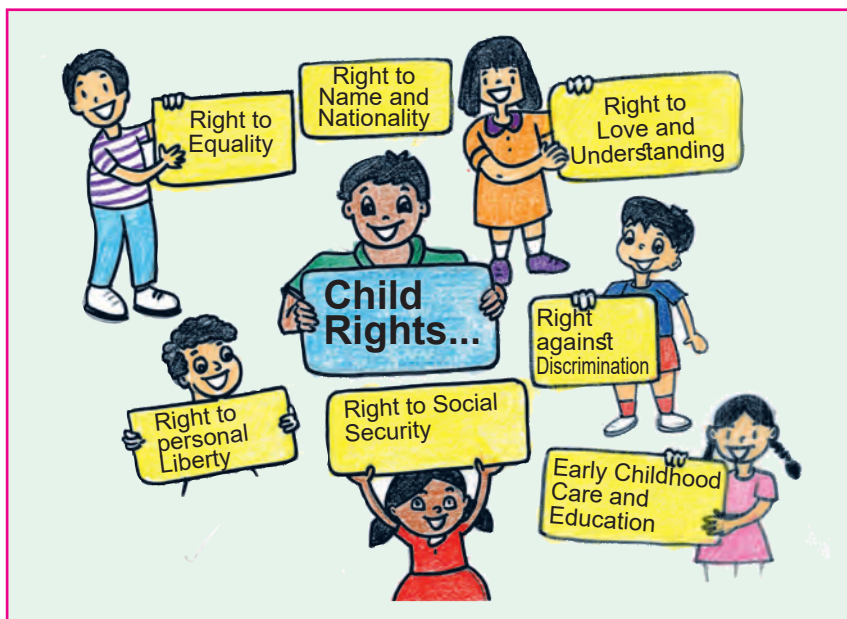
a large number of children in our country are not fulfilled properly. Children are the most important asset of a nation. They shape the destiny of the nation. The children have a right to protection against any kind of abuse, trafficking and exploitation. Government has also provided various constitutional provisions, opportunities and facilities to safeguard the interest of children and facilitate their integrated development. The child has the right to be protected by law from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse and neglect maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Such protection also covers the relationship of a child with his or her parents, legal guardians or any other person who is responsible for the care of the child. Many children suffer from ill health and diseases and do not get adequate food, shelter, medical facilities and a conducive environment for their development. Some children are orphans or neglected by the society on the basis of their caste, community, religion, sect or language.

Information Hub!!

Guidelines with reference to children.

1. Right to free and compulsory elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.(Article 21A)
2. Right to be protected from any hazardous employment till the age of 14 years (Article 24)
3. Right to be protected from being abused and forced by economic necessity to enter occupations unsuited to their age or strength (Article 39 (e))
4. Right to equal opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and guaranteed protection of childhood and youth against moral and material abandonment(Article 39 (f))
5. Right to early childhood care and education to all children until they complete the age of six years (Article 45)

Ref : <http://www.haqcrc.org.child.right/constitution.of.India>



Picture 3.7 Child Rights

Children's Right as per the Indian Constitution

1. Right to equality (Article 14)
2. Right against discrimination (Article 15)
3. Right to personal liberty and due process of law (Article 21)
4. No child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any hazardous employment.(Article 24)
5. Right to being protected from being trafficked and forced into bonded labour (Article 29)
6. The government has the flexibility to undertake appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure child rights. (Article 37)
7. Right of weaker sections of the people to be protected from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46)
8. Right to nutrition and standard of living and improved public health. (Article 47)

The Government of India adopted the National Policy for Children in 1974 and there was a shift of focus from 'Child Welfare' to

'Child Development'. The policy was intended to ensure effective services for children in the areas of education, health, nutrition and recreation with special emphasis on the weaker sections of society. The Government of India has taken a number of measures related to child rights, protection and child development in India, following which The Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence as separate ministry from 30th Jan 2006, earlier it was under the Ministry of Human Resources Department

Rights of Children on the Global Scene

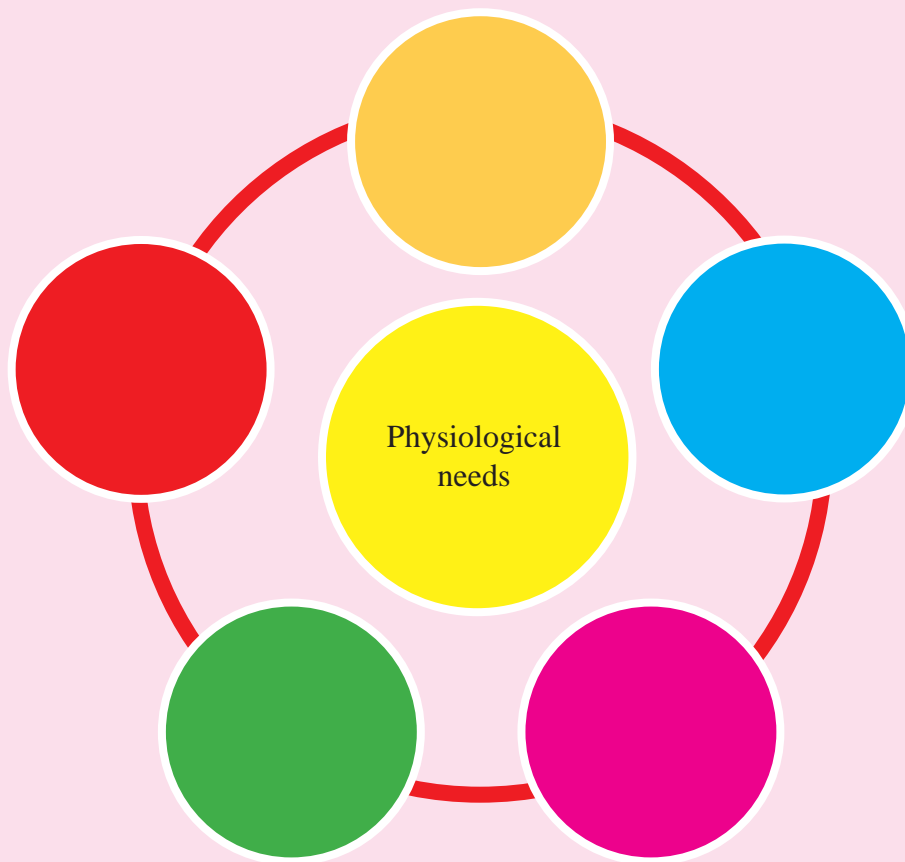
The **UNICEF** was established in 1946 as the first major step in order to safeguard the interest of children. The Universal declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. The provisions of that declaration and its two International Convention on human rights, adopted in 1966, recognized that children need protection against all oppressive features and forces. The Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959 was the first statement issued by the **United Nations** for the protection of child rights. It was a kind of moral direction rather than a legally binding framework.

The UN declaration of the Rights of the child

1. Right to equality
2. Right to special protection
3. Right to name and nationality
4. Right to social security
5. Right to special care for children with special needs
6. Right to love and understanding
7. Right to education
8. Right to receive protection and relief
9. Right to be protected from forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation
10. Right to be protected from practices fostering discrimination

Activity :

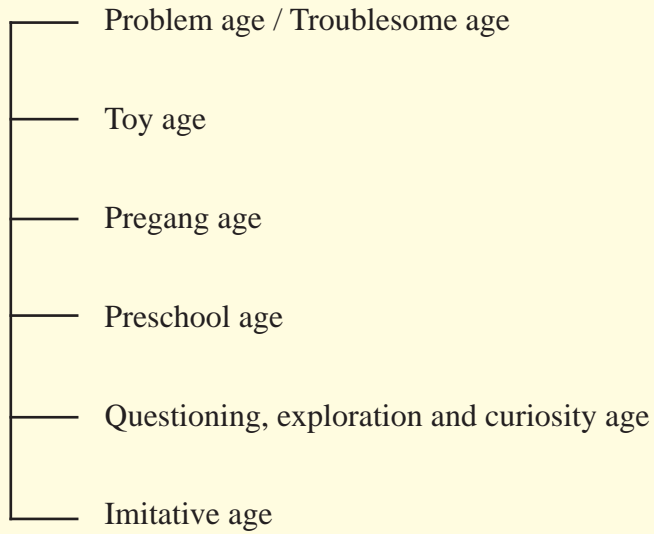
Fill up the Physiological needs and write one example of each



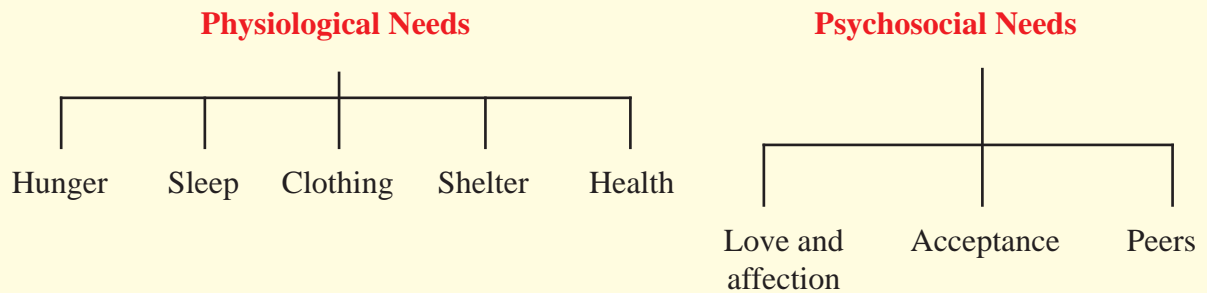
Glossary

Psychosocial Needs : Needs that refer to psychological and social factors such as love and affection, belonging and emotional support.

A) Characteristics of Early Childhood

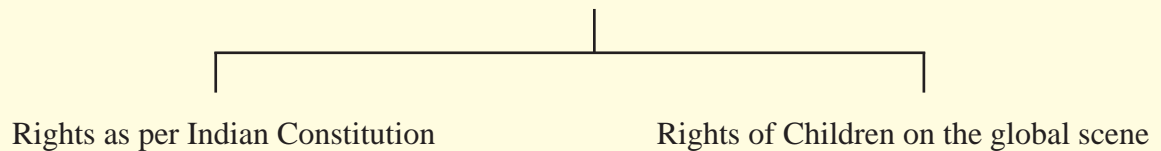


B) Needs of Children



C)

Rights of Children



Exercises

Q. 1. Select and write the most appropriate word from the alternatives given.

1. Early childhood starts from two years and ends at years.
 a) 8 b) 6
 c) 10
2. Love and affection is a need of children.
 a) *psychosocial* b) *physiological*
 c) *social*

3. The Government of India adopted the for Children in 1974.

- a) *National policy*
- b) *Human Right policy*
- c) *State policy*

Q. 2. Explain the following terms.

1. Problem age
2. Toy age
3. Questioning age
4. Imitative age.
5. Rights of Children
6. Psychosocial needs

Q. 3. Match the following characteristics with the stages of development :

A	B
1) Physiological need	a) Early childhood
2) Psychosocial need	b) Child Rights
3) Questioning age	c) Acceptance
4) Equality	d) Shelter
	e) Late childhood

Q. 4. Identify and make a list of physiological and psychosocial needs.

Acceptance, Hunger, Shelter, Love and affection, Clothing, Peer, Hunger, Thirst, Sleep, Rest, Health.

Q. 5. Read the following and write answers to questions.

Generally, parents enrol their children in a preschool around the age of 3 years. Educators refer to the early childhood years as the 'preschool age'. Preschool education aims at the overall development

of a child. Aspects of development such as physical, motor, cognitive, language, emotional and social are developed during the preschool years as a result of being exposed to a stimulating environment, experiences and opportunities for play and exploration. Preschool education prepares the child for formal education.

1. Why is early childhood called the 'Preschool age'?
2. How does preschool education prepare a child for formal education?

Q. 6. Write the following in your own words with appropriate explanation.

1. Why are childhood years so crucial in the human life span?
2. Explain the Child Rights in detail.

Project / Self Study

- *Collect the information on Government policies of Early Childhood Education and write a report on it.*

