Basic Needs of Young Children: The Theories
Theories are ways of looking at things; in this case, theories explore human development. A theorist is someone who develops an idea or a set of ideas in order to explain something. In order to understand the impact of early childhood development on each individual, we should have an understanding of the different theorists who have impacted views on child development, such as Maslow, Kohlberg, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky and Gesell.
You may have heard of Abraham Maslow. He developed a hierarchy of needs and said that we cannot move to a higher level until the needs of the lower level are met. Maslow felt that humans must meet certain needs, in a specific order, in order to reach the upper levels of self-realization (self-actualization) and transcendence. His levels are based on needs. For instance, think about a time when you didn’t eat breakfast before you came to school. Were you able to fully concentrate on your work? What about a time when you had an anxiety about something? Did that impact the way you related to others?

The same is true for young children. If they are hungry or tired, they will not be able to focus on tasks or even play well with others. If they are concerned about being in a new room or with a new teacher, they may not be able to deal with the tasks of the day.

How does understanding Maslow’s theory of development relate to being a caregiver for children?
Have you ever left your house in a hurry, without eating breakfast? How did it affect your ability to focus in class, learn and remember? Until our basic physical needs are met, we have a very hard time thinking of anything else. Children who do not eat on a regular basis, either because of poverty or neglect, do poorly in school. They are simply too hungry to think about learning. The same is true if we do not have secure shelter or the ability to get a good night’s rest.

After those needs are met, we begin to think about the next level of needs, including the need for safety and freedom from anxiety. Once again, we cannot focus on higher-level thinking skills until these basic safety needs are met. If a family is worried about being safe in their home, it is difficult to focus on homework. Can you think of examples of these types of safety issues?

Love and belonging are basic human needs, and everyone needs to feel as if he or she belongs. This attachment can happen in a nuclear family, in an extended family or even in a close circle of friends. This is deeper, however, than simply a casual friendship. These needs for belonging involve deep and permanent ties. Children need to feel that they belong, and if they do not, that feeling of isolation can cause damage to their self-esteem.
When we rightly praise and encourage children, we help them move into Maslow’s next level, which develops confidence and self-worth. Allowing children to do things on their own and, consequently, achieve things on their own allows them to feel the sense of pride and accomplishment associated with that. Others begin to respect them for their unique abilities, and this, in turn, continues to build self-confidence. This is not only true for children, though. All of us need to do things that we can be proud of, to accomplish new things. As we move through life, this level allows us to be successful.

Self-actualized people are self-aware and fully use their talents, capabilities and potential. Self-actualization, according to Maslow, is a level that most people never fully achieve. Do you know of someone that you believe is (or was) self-actualized? Why do you believe that?
Complete the pyramid with the name of each level and the needs it represents, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs.

Maslow’s Online Game
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
http://www.purposegames.com/game/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-quiz
Kohlberg’s Levels of Morality

- Level I – Pre-conventional (4 – 10 years)
  - Stage 1: Punishment and obedience. Children obey to avoid being caught and punished
  - Stage 2: Naive instrumental behaviorism. Children obey rules but only for pure self-interest. “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.”

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927 - 1987) was an American who studied the levels of morality.
Kohlberg’s Levels of Morality

- **Level II: Conventional (10 – 13 years)**
  - Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations. Children seek approval of others and adopt the “good boy-good girl” mentality. They base moral judgments on whether or not someone meant to do well.
  - Stage 4: Law-and-order mentality. Children are concerned with authority and maintaining the social order. Correct behavior is “doing one’s duty.”
Kohlberg’s Levels of Morality

- Level III: Post-conventional (13 years and older)
- Stage 5: Social contract. Laws are obeyed because they have been accepted by society as a whole
- Stage 6: Universal ethical principles. Individuals follow their own conscience about what is right. Behavior is the same no matter who is present.

How does the family influence a child’s moral development?

How do caregivers influence a child’s moral development?
Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development

http://youtu.be/svDYaQUVWfI
From the very earliest days of life, infants begin to learn whether or not they can trust the world around them. Responsive, nurturing care teaches infants that the world is a safe place where their needs and wants are met. Children who are ignored, abused or neglected can learn that the world is NOT safe and that their needs will NOT be met. You can see, then, how important it is for children to be with parents or caretakers who love and respond to them in a non-critical way and are available to them at all times. Very young infants should never be punished, as they do not have the capability to change their behavior to suit the desires of others.

The next stage is the conflict between autonomy and shame or self-doubt. Young children begin to have some control over themselves and their lives. They begin toilet training, learning how to control bodily functions. They begin to be able to control their emotions, understanding that some emotions (and actions) must be moderated. When they learn that they have some control, they begin to have feelings of self-confidence and independence. Children who do not learn these things are often left feeling frustrated and doubtful of their own abilities. Allowing young children some control and some choices gives them a solid foundation for independence later in life.
Preschoolers start to show their power and control over their world and others. Have you ever seen a four-year-old girl “directing” the play of a pretend family? “You be the daddy. I’m the mother. He’s the baby.” Or maybe you’ve seen a five-year-old boy telling others how to build a tower or “fly” the airplane. In each of these examples, children are learning to assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. They are practicing leadership skills. Children who successfully negotiate this stage develop greater self-confidence, feel capable and learn to be leaders. Children who do not successfully negotiate this stage are left with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of initiative.

As children move into middle childhood, they have more social interactions and more time with other children and adults. They begin to have pride in their accomplishments, and the encouragement of teachers and parents is very important during this time in life. Children are eager to know that their “work” is valuable, worthwhile and acceptable. If they are encouraged and supported in this, they will feel competent and have a belief in their own skills and abilities. Those children who are not supported and encouraged may feel that they can never be successful.

How can a caregiver assist in positive pathways throughout the stages in Erikson’s theories?
The Science of Early Childhood Development

Harvard Education
(click on link)

The Science of Early Childhood Development
This video is from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University features Center Director Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
http://youtu.be/tLiP4b-TPCA
Social/Emotional, Cognitive and Physical Needs of Children
What contributes to healthy child development?

Possible answers might include:

**Physical needs**  
Some of these changes occur in the entire body such as bones and muscles, internal organs and the brain. Other physical development changes include hormones and motor skills.

**Emotional needs**  
Emotional feelings can be love, hate, happiness, anger, jealousy and fear. Another part of emotional development is understanding how to express their emotions while learning how to control their responses to certain emotions. Emotions play a vital role in personality development. Children can learn how to express their emotions in a healthy manner through interactions with parents, siblings, caregivers and others.

**Social needs**  
Children first learn about interacting and relating to other people by observing their parents. A child’s social development is greatly influenced by how much or how little contact he or she has with other people.

**Intellectual needs**  
Intellectual development includes all of the brain’s activities and functions such as memory, perception, problem solving, decision-making and imagining.

Ask the students how a caregiver can contribute to a healthy child development in each area: physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs.
Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist (1896 - 1980), believed that children’s thinking passes through four separate stages and that children are active learners. Two of these sub-stages apply to children from birth to the age of five. Piaget is sometimes referred to as a “stage theorist.”

The sensory-motor stage (birth to age two) is when children are using their physical or motor skills and their senses to explore their world and develop their cognitive understandings. You know that babies put things in their mouths. This is their way of exploring something new that has come into their world. Slightly older infants will move an object from hand to hand, sit on it or try to hear it. They are using all their senses (sight, sound, hearing, touch and smell) to explore things and learn how they fit into the world.

The pre-operational stage (from age two to seven years) is a time when children are less reliant upon their senses and physical exploration and, according to Piaget, are “illogical thinkers.” For example, children in this stage can be shown that two balls of dough are exactly the same size, and they will agree that the balls are the same size, but when one is flattened, they will usually tell you that one of them is now bigger. This inability to conserve a thought and transfer it to a new arena is a feature of the pre-operational stage.
Piaget's Stages of Development
This is a collection of clips demonstrating Piaget's Stages of development.
http://youtu.be/TRF27F2bn-A?list=PLYJcqMAI9Y-mSueAA938U-UzN5VHkq1Ob
How does brain development impact cognitive development? Why is language and literacy a part of cognitive development? What do children need from a caregiver?

It was Vygotsky who brought about the idea that thinking in concepts was not possible without verbal thinking. “While thought and language initially develop independently, they are merged once language is developed to create verbal thought.”
Lev Vygotsky, a Russian theorist (1896 - 1934) developed a theory that was about cognitive development but relates closely social/emotional development as well. Like Piaget, he saw children as active partners in their own learning who are able to use and appreciate help from others. He called this help from adults and/or peers “scaffolding.” Just as a scaffold helps a painter reach the top of a wall, adults or peers can “scaffold” a child to the next level of learning. He also emphasized the importance of language development to a child’s cognitive development.
What are some examples of hands-on activities for a four-year-old? Five-year-old? Six-year-old?
Social/Emotional Needs

Attachment and Bonding

- Continuity of care: children need to be with the same caregivers for as long as possible during their time in care
- Consistency of care: children can expect the same from the adults in their lives day after day - - at home and in school

We talked earlier about the theorists working with attachment and bonding, but what does this mean for someone working in the field of child care?

Children need to bond with the adults in their lives, both at home and wherever they are in care. In order to do this, they need to have time with the same adults, day after day. Just time, though, is not enough. The time needs to be with adults who are nurturing and loving and who are genuinely interested in the children in their care.

“Continuity of care” is the idea that children need to be with the same caregivers, day after day, throughout their time in care. Ideally, caregivers will greet their children the first day they enter care and stay with them for the next several years. It harkens back to the idea of being a “teacher of this child” rather than a teacher of some age group of children. This type of continuity allows children to build strong bonds and feel safe, secure and loved. It’s not a concept that is used often in child care, but it is a very, very important one.

“Consistency of care” means that children can expect the same from the adults in their lives day after day. It means that the adults (in this case, child care workers) are consistently kind, cheerful, interested and attentive. Children should not have to wonder each day if their caregivers are going to be distracted, angry or disinterested. They should be able to come to care, knowing that the adults will make the day happy, fun and interesting.
Arnold Gesell (1880 – 1961) is the most well-known theorist in the field of physical development, also known as maturation. He posited that growth and development occur in orderly stages and sequence, which are predictable. The individual genetic timetable affects rate of maturation, but all children mature in the same orderly sequence. His work accounts for the milestone timetables that we use in child development today when we are discussing the important physical milestones that children exhibit, such as walking around 12 months or developing a great deal of language by age two.
Physical Needs of Young Children

Patterns of physical growth:
- Proximal-distal: from the center out
- Cephalocaudal: from the top down
- Important how they influence teacher expectations and need for exercise

There are two major trends in the way that physical and motor development takes place: proximal-distal and cephalocaudal. Proximal-distal means development from the center of the body outward, such as the ability to roll over before being able to hold a spoon. Cephalocaudal means development from the head to tail, such as an infant being able to lift his head before walking. These trends influence expectations of the adult and determine what types of physical activities are most developmentally appropriate.
Physical Needs of Children

- To support appropriate gross motor development, children must have time to move—run, play, skip, jump, hop, throw or climb
- Not all gross motor play should be teacher directed—let them outside to play

Just as we must practice any new skill, children must have the time and space to develop their gross motor skills. It is impossible to learn how to hop on one foot if you never get to practice hopping on one foot! All of these gross motor skills require a large enough space to practice them. Children should go outdoors EVERY day, unless the weather is severely prohibitive. It’s very important to remember that some children have no outdoor time once they go home, either due to time or their location. If you cannot go outside, these skills must be practiced inside.
There are several different ways that children are growing and changing physically.

What are their needs when it comes to physical development?
One of the hazards to gross motor development is the amount of “screen time” children now have in their lives. If they are watching TV or playing video games, they are not running, playing, skipping, hopping or throwing. They are sitting. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mayo Clinic and the National Association for the Education of Young Children all agree that there should be NO screen time for children under the age of two. None. That means no television, videos, movies, computers, cell phone or games. There are many reasons for this, including the impact on cognitive development, but screen time adversely affects physical development at a time in life when it is critical. They also recommend very limited screen time (two hours a day or less) for children between the ages of three and five.
Physical Needs of Children

To support fine motor development, children need to draw with chunky crayons, small crayons and pencils, use play dough, stack small and large blocks, paint, cut, put on dress-up clothes or button their coats.

Fine motor skill development is important as we all use these skills for our entire lives. Think of the number of things that you do that require the use of your fine motor skills – eating, buttoning clothes, writing notes, cutting or hammering. These skills are learned in early childhood. Sometimes teachers avoid allowing these activities because they can be messy. It’s important to remember how very, very important it is to allow children to practice these things.
Physical Development of Young Children

- Self-help skills
  - Dressing/grooming
  - Feeding
  - Potty training
- Value of play
  - Indoor
  - Outdoor

Children must have the opportunity to do things for themselves. It’s sometimes easier to continue dressing children, feeding them and letting them wear diaper type “underwear.” All of these things actually handicap children. Once they have the skill to do something, the adults around them should encourage them to try. This is not to say that adults should not help children, only that they should allow them to practice and develop such skills.
Infants now sleep on their backs for safety. This makes time on their tummies to exercise those muscles critical to the development of head/neck support, rolling over, sitting up, crawling and some fine motor skills. Research is beginning to show impaired development in large and small muscles if children are denied enough time on their tummies for exercise and exploring.

Children cannot experience their world from a container. (Some people refer to them as buckets!) They need to be on the floor where they can explore, manipulate age appropriate materials and interact with other children and teachers. Children left in containers for the convenience of adults do not develop the appropriate muscle strength and skills. Their social/emotional development is also in jeopardy because this practice severely limits children’s access to interactions with others.
Responsible Child Care: Ensuring a Safe, Healthy Environment
We’ve discussed the developmental needs of young children. Now let’s discuss the thing that most everyone would agree is the most important aspect of child care: safety. If children are not in a safe and caring environment, if they are not protected, then none of the other aspects of development are important. Caregivers are responsible for providing a safe, nurturing environment for children. They are responsible for protecting children from injury as well as for meeting the needs of the children.

Child care providers should be responsible and well-trained caregivers. Caregivers should be trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Professional caregivers should complete a certification program and have cleared a criminal background check.

Most often parents are the primary caregivers for their children. The child care profession provides secondary or substitute care. Secondary care, therefore, can be seen as adding to the care that parents give their children. The child care profession includes secondary child caregivers and the services they offer. Center-based and home-based child care programs have the job of caring for children in the child care setting. The need for high quality, affordable early care and education has increased due to a growing number of working mothers, dual-earner families and single-parent families.
Child care providers are responsible for providing shelter and meeting the nutritional and educational needs of the children in their care.

They have many roles and responsibilities. Caregivers must have excellent training and experience to provide the most adequate child care to children. A caregiver is also responsible for the safety and security of the children and the facility. They are also responsible for following the state’s laws and regulations pertaining to the operation of the child care center and providing an adequate educational program to develop the children’s physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs. Discipline is appropriate and does not cause harm to the children. The facility should be clean and the physical setting inviting and homelike. The teachers and staff attend to the children, and there is a good adult-child ratio. The parents feel welcomed, and there is open communication between the parents and the caregivers.
Caregivers should actively promote positive behaviors, which improve the atmosphere and help prevent problems. Positive behaviors include prosocial skills, self-control and getting along with others. Many direct guidance strategies used by caregivers help promote positive behavior in children. Direct guidance is used when a caregiver works directly with a child. To promote positive behavior, a few general guidelines should be followed, which include observing children at all times, being consistent, modeling positive behavior, communicating at the child’s level, setting appropriate limits and encouraging initiative, independence and responsibility.

These are three different types of guidance techniques:

Redirecting - With redirection, children are led in a new activity related to their play at the time.

Encouraging use of words - Caregivers can help children use words to share their wishes. For example, when Suzy reaches for a car that Joshua is using, the caregiver might say, “Suzy, ask Joshua, ‘May I play with the yellow car?’ “If Joshua says, “No,” the caregiver can help Suzy choose another toy from the shelf.

Giving the child a choice - The caregiver can also distract a child from a conflict or from negative behavior by giving choices. Giving him or her two choices at a time makes the decision easier on the child and caregiver.

Using any one of these positive guidance techniques can help deter abusive behavior by reducing frustration.

What are examples of prosocial skills? Possible answers might include:

- Cooperation (working together to reach a goal)
- Giving of themselves
- Helpfulness (the act of removing distress from another person)
- Helping (acts of kindness or rescuing)
- Sharing (dividing up or bestowing)
• Showing concern for others
• Showing positive verbal and physical contact
• Showing sympathy and kindness
• Taking the perspective of another person
The Head Start programs are invested in keeping children healthy and safe, as well as providing other best practices. Spend some time looking over all these requirements to help keep our children well. What items do you feel are most important? What things surprised you?

Head Start
An overview of policies and regulations regarding child health and safety.
While not regulatory, the NAEYC programs are invested in keeping children healthy and safe, as well as providing other best practices. Spend some time looking over all these requirements to help keep our children well. What items do you feel are most important? What things surprised you?

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Overview of the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards
State licensing in each state is designed to keep children safe and healthy. Licensing is the regulatory agency that inspects and ensures that children are in a protected and safe environment at all times. In Texas, this agency comes under the umbrella of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. People who care for children must meet the requirements and submit to inspection visits, both announced and unannounced. In Texas, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, regulates the safety standards for children.

Teacher note: After you click on the picture, go to pages 133-141 to discuss safety practices.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers.
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf
Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development: An Overview

Dr. Bruce Perry
Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development: An Overview
[click on link]

Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development: An Overview
This brief overview provides an introduction to the Six Core Strengths program developed by Dr. Bruce Perry and The Child Trauma Academy.
http://youtu.be/skaYWK6iD4
Employment opportunities for careers in early childhood services range from counseling to educational opportunities and service positions. Employment opportunities in this area can be limitless. The limits are established by the individual. This lesson provides an excellent opportunity for students to research careers in the industry and current business trends. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics is an excellent resource to use during this unit. This government resource provides current job outlook and salary information.

Short- and long-term career goals should align with opportunities based on interests and work values. Goal setting is necessary because it allows you to plan for your short-term future as well as your long-term future. When making career choices in the area of Child Development, you need to be a good manager of time, resources and goal setting. Match characteristics of your current or most recent occupation with similar occupations, and find specific information such as the fastest growing jobs, levels of education and training requirements and average salaries. For a self-assessment, skills transferability, work exploration, career clusters and occupational information, refer to [http://www.texascaresonline.com/wowmenu.asp](http://www.texascaresonline.com/wowmenu.asp).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of childcare workers is expected to grow by 20 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. Parents will continue to need assistance during working hours to care for their children. Because the number of children requiring childcare is expected to grow, demand for childcare workers is expected to grow as well.

In the past decade, early childhood education has become widely recognized as important for children’s development. Childcare workers often work alongside preschool teachers as assistants. This continued focus on the importance of early childhood education, in addition to
increases in the number of children in this age group, will spur demand for preschool programs and thus for childcare workers. Workers with formal education should have the best job prospects. However, even those without formal education who are interested in the occupation should have little trouble finding employment due to the need to replace workers who leave the occupation.

Child care is a challenging career, but it is also rewarding, exciting and fulfilling to know that you are forever touching the lives of children.

Texas Workforce Commission
Texas Cares Online
http://www.texascaresonline.com/wowmenu.asp
References and Resources

Images:
- Microsoft clip art used with permission from Microsoft.

Textbook:

Websites:
- Department of Children and Families
  Office of Head Start
  https://www.hhs.gov/ash/hsd.html

- California Department of Education
  Early Childhood and Family Services
  https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ec/eceac1.htm

- Head Start
  An overview of policies and regulations regarding child health and safety
  https://www.hhs.gov/ash/hsd/hsdheadstart/policies/regulations/healthand safety

- Medscape
  Medscape’s hierarchy of needs

- National Association for the Education of Young Children
  Promoting excellence in early childhood education
  https://www.naeyc.org/
References and Resources

- Rhode Island Adult Education Professional Development Center
  Malow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers.
  https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Document/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/44_Center.pdf

- Texas Workforce Commission
  Texas Cares Online

- Zero to Three
  This Brain Quiz was created to introduce some of the basic concepts concerning early brain research in a way that challenges us to think critically and creatively about what we have heard about the research.
References and Resources

- Kohlberg’s Theory
  Theory of Moral Development
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzY6jyV87Ww

- Piaget’s Stages of Development
  This is a collection of clips demonstrating Piaget’s stages of development.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLF4Lbri5d4

- Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development: An Overview
  This brief overview provides an introduction to the Six Core Strengths program developed by Dr. Bruce Perry and The Child Trauma Academy.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tjMzJU0Gd0

- The Science of Early Childhood Development
  This video is from the series on the Developing Child at Harvard University lectures Center Director, Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4e-FCA