

Dear Families/Caregivers,

Psychologist Abraham Maslow studied what motivates people to achieve and determined that certain basic needs for survival, safety, and belonging must be met for students to reach their full potential.

We learned that our basic physical needs include air, food, water, sleep, shelter, and security. We also learned we all have a need to belong. Our belonging needs are met through family, school, and other groups such as teams, church, clubs, and neighborhood.

Here are some ideas to help your child meet his or her basic needs in order to position him or her to develop his or her cognitive abilities:

- Attend to your child's basic needs first. Is your child getting enough healthy foods? Is your child getting enough water? Is your child getting enough sleep? These may seem obvious, but in our busy, hectic lives, it's easy to overlook some of the basics.
- Check in with your child to discuss his or her feelings of safety or security. Sometimes these feelings change when things happen in the home (such as a divorce or conflict) or at school (such as bullying). You won't be able to keep things from happening but be there to help your child advocate for his or her needs.
- Talk about the groups your child belongs to. Are the relationships in the groups helping him or her feel more secure or less? Are there other groups your child would like to be a part of?

Belonging is an important need that helps children understand themselves and others. The feeling of belonging helps children feel confident, happy and safe. When they feel confident, happy and safe, they are better able to learn, make good decisions, and set goals.

Sincerely,  
Your Child's Teacher