



**“But What Happens When  
They Leave the Classroom???”**

**Considering Access Beyond the Schoolroom**

**New Mexico School for the Deaf  
Center for Educational Consultation and Training**



Language and  
Communication  
are **EVERYTHING**  
for Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Children.

**This is also true outside of  
the classroom at school!**

## How do we consider school access or inclusion for deaf or hard of hearing students?

The concept of “access” for a deaf or hard of hearing student is commonly considered in relation to the classroom, the instructional lesson or the teacher’s message. The overall school experience for a student extends well beyond the classroom. How a student experiences all aspects of the school day influences their academic performance.....favorably or not.

# Insight to the student's experience at school...

- The educational realities of the deaf or hard of hearing child are such that physical inclusion often does not equate with school-wide membership or inclusiveness.
- Deaf students can feel like visitors – they may be welcomed visitors, but that is not the same thing as being members of a school community.
- The socio-emotional well-being of the deaf or hard of hearing students impacts their ability to engage in learning and participate throughout the school day.
- Hearing people will never be able to truly understand or assess the experience of a deaf student.

# How important are peer relationships in school?

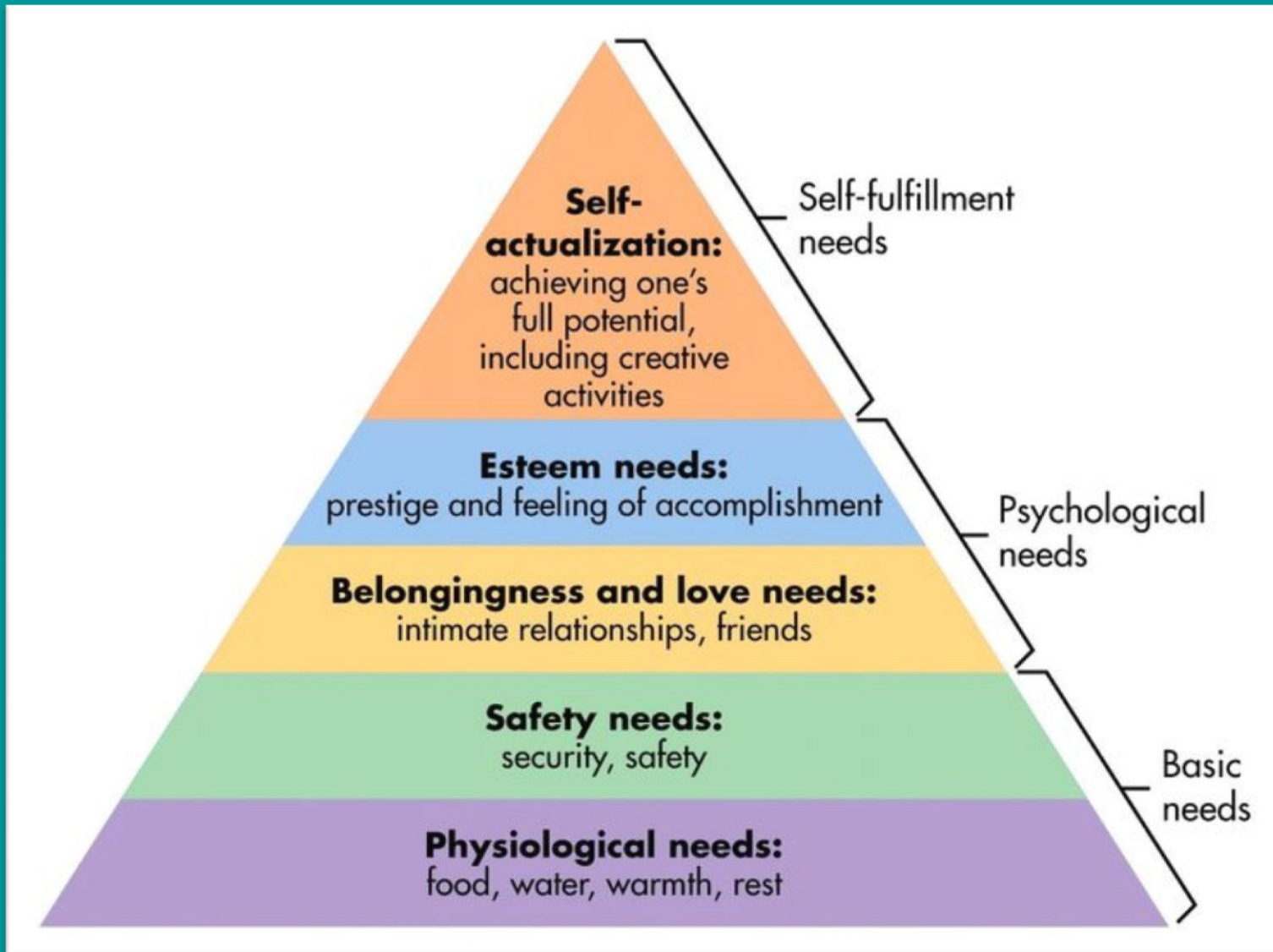
In a 2003 article in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Furrer and Skinner indicate that a number of **studies have demonstrated a link between children's perceptions of peer social and emotional support and their academic goals, engagement, and self-concept**

(DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan, & Evans, 1002; Felner, Aber, Primavera, & Cauce, 1985; Harter, 1996; Murdock, 1999; Wentzel, 1994, 1997, 1998).

*“Blindness separates us from things, but deafness separates us from people.”*

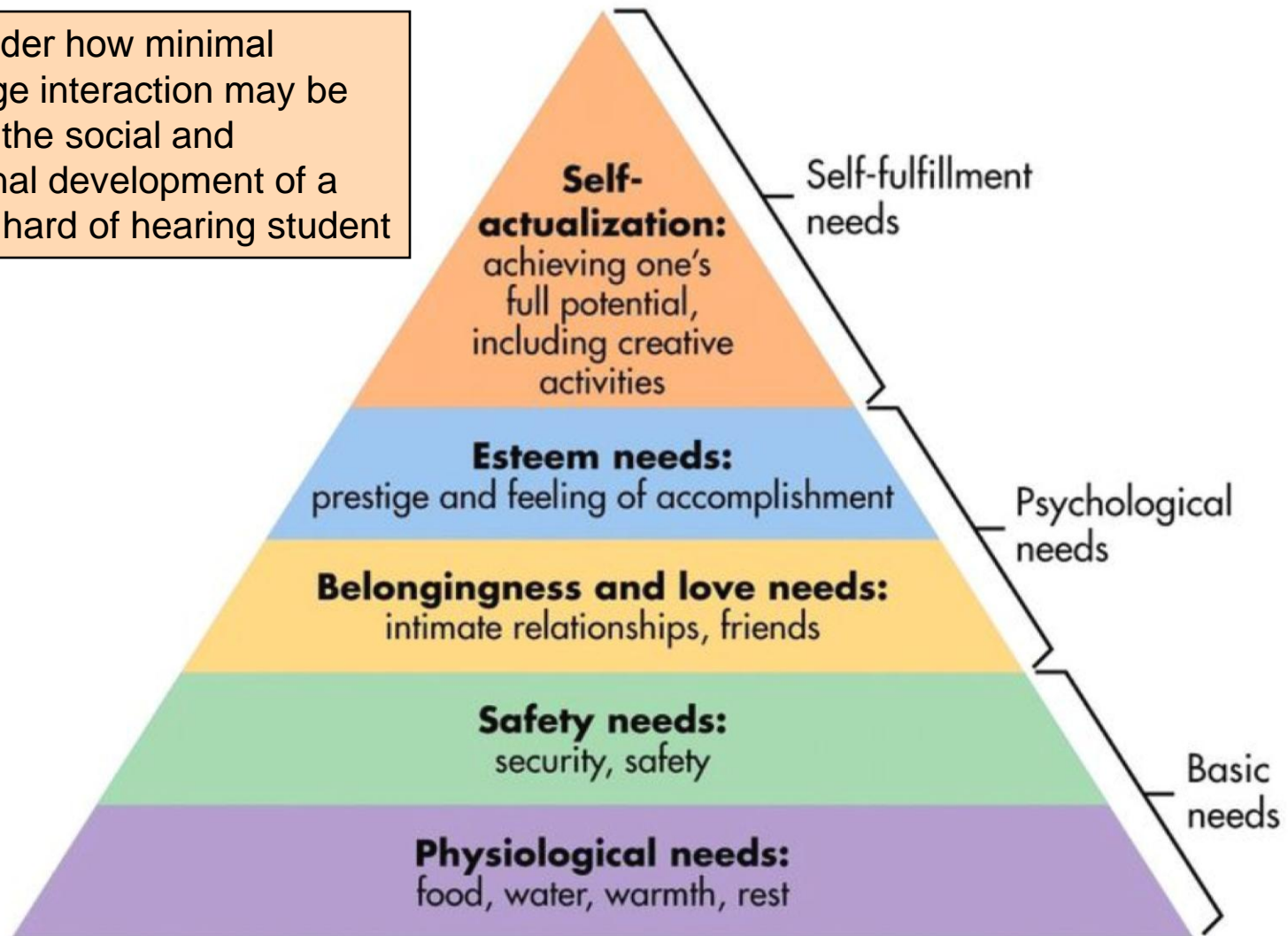
**- Helen Keller**

# We know Maslow's Hierarchy of needs...

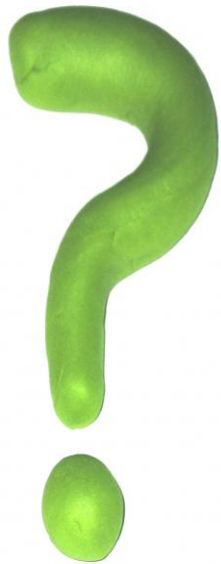


Maslow tells us that higher level growth cannot be achieved while lower level needs are not met...

...consider how minimal language interaction may be limiting the social and emotional development of a deaf or hard of hearing student



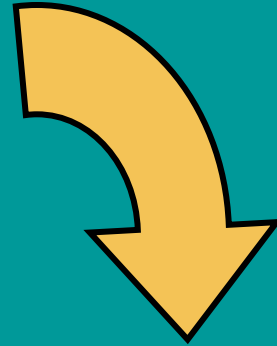




What does  
access look like for  
our students at  
school when they are  
not in the classroom?

Hearing Students

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graph TD; A([Hearing Students]) --> B([What do they have access to outside of the classroom?]); B --- C([JOKES]); B --- D([LUNCH ROOM]); B --- E([PLAY GROUND]); B --- F([SIDE CONVERSATIONS]); B --- G([HALLWAY CHATTING]);
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What do they have access to outside of the classroom?

JOKES

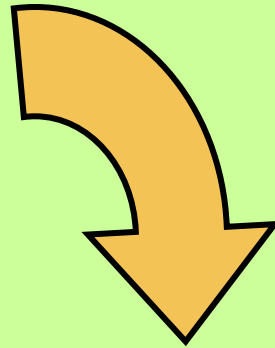
LUNCH ROOM

PLAY GROUND

SIDE CONVERSATIONS

HALLWAY CHATTING

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students



What **should** they have access to outside of the classroom?

JOKES

LUNCH ROOM

PLAY GROUND

SIDE CONVERSATIONS

HALLWAY CHATTING

# Some of the benefits of social interactions...

Learning opportunities!

Language modeling from peers!

Friendships!

Relationships **improve** brain and intellectual development!

Nurtures self expression!

Social skill development!

Understanding social norms!

# Not only signing students need to be considered...

**People may understand what a student using sign language misses without peers and adults who share their language. It may be less understood that the student using spoken language is ...**

- believed to have more access than they really do when, in reality, they miss information, instruction and conversations more often than staff/peers realize
- not knowing, themselves, what they are missing
- good at “faking” understanding
- at risk of missing the subtleties of communication and humor

# Some questions to consider about your student's experience...

- Is your student a full member of the school community or might they have the experience of a welcomed visitor?
- How is access considered for interactions outside of the classroom?
- What socially rich experiences may not be available for your student?
- Interpreters need breaks – what happens to a student's experience when their interpreter is not present?
- Not all students wear their listening devices outside of the classroom. As a result, how is their experience impacted?
- Does the school community have awareness of the child's language and communication needs and how to be inclusive of them?

# Strategies to support student inclusion outside of the classroom

- Make interpreters available in non-academic settings. If viable, include the student in brainstorming how they would envision using an interpreter in those environments.
- Give hearing students tips to improve communication with the D/HH student (i.e. write notes or draw pictures, establish eye contact before starting a conversation, incorporate sign language or gestures, encourage students to send messages/pictures to each other (instant messaging or email) when doing computer work.
- Create a class activity to identify students' interests/hobbies – this allows the students and the teacher to see which students are interested in the same things, enabling them to develop a new relationship based on shared interest.
- Play charade-like games with the class – practicing ways to communicate messages without using spoken language.

# Strategies to support student inclusion outside of the classroom (cont'd)

- Create school-wide or grade-level projects that promote collaborative peer interaction e.g. recycling, school beautification, anti-bullying, etc.
- Create grade-level student committees e.g. newsletter, clean-up, birthday celebrations, where students work collaboratively toward a shared goal.
- Classroom meetings with students that encourage problem-solving and critical thinking skill development.
- Use of role play to model and refine social skills in a variety of settings



**How can you better  
support your student?**

**For more information or discussion  
around this topic, please be in touch  
with your assigned educational  
consultant.**

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