WHAT NEED IS NOT BEING MET?

When observing problem behaviour in children, often it is helpful to ask yourself a series of questions to identify the possible underlying motivation for the behaviour. The categories are not mutually exclusive and a child may be motivated by more than one unmet need.

Survival

Is the child normal weight?

Does the child come to school clean?

Does the child usually come to school with lunch?

Is the child delivered to and collected from school on time?

Does the child have the required school books / stationary? (within reasonable time frames)

Love/belonging (This is the dominating unmet need for lower primary school-aged children)

Has there been a significant family disruption?

Does the parent/s have long work hours / long child care hours?

Is the child suffering over-protective parenting?

Is the child under parented?

Does the child have extensive outside school activities?

Is the child an only child / have many siblings? (eg; more than 3)

Power

Does the child seem to frequently fail at things they attempt?

Are they given positive reinforcement?

Does the child have any apparent strengths?

Does the child have overly controlling or ambitious parents?

Does the child have successful siblings?

Is the child’s efforts rewarded?

Are the expectations of the child and the parents realistic?
**Freedom (this is the dominating unmet need for adolescent and upper primary-aged children)**

Is the child suffering from overly rigid or controlling parenting or teaching practices?

Does the child experience inflexibility in their primary environments (school and home)?

Does the child appear to have a lack of ownership over things that impact on the student?

Does the child have the ability to express individuality or strengths/interests?

Does the child have the ability to speak their opinion?

**Fun**

Does the child have the opportunity to relax laugh, play?

Does the child have time to de-stress?

Does the child have time to play with age-appropriate games with peers?

Does the child have an abundance of chores / responsibilities / extra-curricular activities?

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**Vicki Goodsell, Cathy Perkins and Kerri Marshall**

**CEO Counsellors (2009)**