



# Attachment in Early Years

Building Secure and loving relationships from pregnancy and throughout the early years lays down the foundations for baby brain development.

In utero babies can hear from 24 weeks gestation and respond through movement to outside stimuli such as talking, a mother rubbing her bump and music. These are the first steps in building communication between a mother and her unborn and aids building the infant's brain architecture. Babies are born ready to communicate and parents that respond to their infants needs in a sensitive and caring way are continuing to support their child to develop appropriately.

Children will thrive when they have a consistent secure and loving care giver. In the early years the child's care giver will be used as a secure base from which to explore their surrounding. Without a secure attachment to a care giver, children do not develop in the same way as their peers who have a secure attachment.



# Babies

Babies are born ready to communicate and seek interaction from their care giver through a range of cues, such as blinking, rooting, head bobbing, mouth opening and turning head, these are early feeding cues, crying is a late cue and will mean your baby has exhausted other ways of ensuring his/her needs are met.

Excessive crying raises cortisol levels (the stress hormone) which has a negative effect on your baby's brain. It is not recommended to leave your baby to cry. You cannot spoil your baby by cuddling, holding, kissing your baby in fact picking up on your baby's cues and responding in a sensitive way helps your baby to feel secure and aids baby brain development.

Babies are able to respond to familiar voices by turning their head towards the sound of voice and will turn in the direction of a familiar voice a non familiar voice. It is important to get to know your baby and spend time talking, singing, smiling and interacting with your baby, you will be rewarded by your baby responding to you through smiles, coos, and knowing you are building a secure bond with your baby. Babies who have their needs met through cuddles, interaction and sensitive parenting build a secure attachment to their parents, so when faced with a distressing situation such as a stranger or a loud noise you baby may cry, but will seek reassurance from you, when you respond in a sensitive way and cuddle your baby, you are being their secure place, your baby will feel safe.

# Toddlers

With a secure attachment as your child grows and develops into a toddler he/she will be able to explore their surrounding with confidence knowing that their parent/caregiver are close by.

Children learn through play and exploring their surroundings, parents can support their child's development through role play and embracing the exploring nature of their child's learning.

# Pre-school

As above- children who have experience warm sensitive and responsive parenting will develop a secure attachment.

The secure attachment allows your child to develop positive expectations about future relationships. Children also use their relationship with their parent/carer to learn about themselves. Experiences that allows a child to develop positive feelings, "I am somebody that people like" this leads to appropriate independence. It is often thought that spoiling your child with love and affection will make them clingy and less independent, this is actually the opposite, providing lots of love and affection and positive reinforcement ensures you child has a secure attachment and provides them with the tools for confidence and independence.



# Reception

By the time your child is ready for school, a child with a secure attachment to their parent/carer, will have positive expectations of self and others and will approach the world with confidence.

When faced with a potentially alarming situation you child will tackle them effectively or will seek help to do so.

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