



# feeling loved

developing attachment and socialization with children



**A Guide to Attachment and Socialization**



# My Expectations



Write or draw two things you hope to learn about attachment and socialization in the space below:

1.



2.



# What is Attachment?

## What is Attachment:

- Is a special \_\_\_\_\_ between a child and another person.
- Begins with a child's \_\_\_\_\_ and continues throughout his childhood and lifetime.
- Develops when an adult \_\_\_\_\_ to a baby's cries, snuggles with him, laughs and plays, and holds him close.

This special relationship **grows** stronger as the baby **responds** by snuggling close to his parents, smiling, gazing and becoming calm when held.

- Does not happen magically in one moment. By having many \_\_\_\_\_ over a period of time, children and adults form attachment relationships that will last a lifetime.

## Words to choose from:

responds    interactions    birth    relationship

## Why is Attachment important?

Attachment allows children to form a **positive view of the world** and the way people relate to each other. A child who forms a secure attachment with adults learns to feel good about herself and her world and wants others to feel the same. The first attachments she develops become the example of the way she relates to other people in her life. Forming insecure attachments or no attachments may leave her feeling confused, alone and believing the world is a bad place where hurt and disappointment are expected.

A child who forms secure attachments will grow into an adult who is better able to maintain **healthy and positive relationships** at work, home and play.

## What is an Interaction?



Draw a single line through all the examples that are NOT interactions between an adult and a child.

Giving children the words they need to solve their problems

Smiling

Touching

Making eye contact

Kneeling to a child's eye level

Encouraging independence when ready

Using open-ended questions

Seeking meaningful conversations

Greeting children upon arrival/departure

Using children's names

Comforting children who are upset

Modeling language

Helping children identify feelings

Building trust

Singing

Reading

Providing opportunities for children to make choices

Respecting children

Listening

Responding

Intervening when necessary



# listening

## What Affects Attachment?

**Attachment is affected by the way you respond to a child's needs.** Do you go to her when she cries? Do you listen when she is speaking? Are her needs met? Being responded to helps a child feel that her needs are important and she is worth listening to.

- List two ways that you are responsive to a child:

**Attachment is affected by how consistent you are for the child.** Do you respond sometimes but not all the time? Is he able to depend on you to be part of his life regularly? Children need the stability of consistent care in order to form attachments.

- How are you consistent for children?

**Attachment is affected by the attitude of your response.** Do you meet her needs with a smile and a gentle touch, or with rough handling and harsh words? When disciplined, is she treated firmly but with kindness and compassion? A child who is dealt with kindly and with gentleness will learn to be kind and gentle with others.

- What is your attitude when you respond to children?

**Attachment is affected by providing safe supervision and guidance for children.** Are you or another adult nearby when needed? Do you provide a safe place from which he can explore? Children need an "anchor," a person who helps and supports while allowing them to learn and explore on their own.

- How do you provide safe supervision and guidance for children?

# Encouragement



Name someone in your life who has been encouraging and positive: \_\_\_\_\_

Write or draw some of the things this person did to be encouraging and positive:



Parents who smile and laugh when interacting with their children are more likely to have children who smile and show joy. Also, happy children relate more positively to other people. What are some ways you can have positive interactions with your children?

# Barriers to Attachment



## Baby:

- Ignoring Baby's cries
- Always waiting to meet his needs
- Colic and fussiness
- Not holding and cuddling her
- Not talking to and playing with her
- Not allowing her to crawl and explore

## Toddler:

- Not giving her any choices
- Giving too many "No's"
- Being ignored
- Not being responded to
- Being overly critical
- Shaming him or her
- Not being allowed to explore and crawl

## Preschool:

- Not allowing him to make friends
- Not encouraging and helping her when she needs it
- Being kept too dependent on adults
- Discouraging her ideas, questions and exploration
- Not receiving hugs and positive words
- Constant punishment

## Special Needs:

- Adult feelings of guilt or depression
- Not spending time with the child during hospitalizations and other traumatic times
- Being unrealistic, such as too positive ("This will all go away,") or too negative ("He can't hear me, so why should I talk to him?")

## Overcoming Barriers

<p><b>Nurture</b></p>	<p><b>Model Social Skills</b></p>	<p><b>Listen and Talk to Children</b></p>
<p><b>Be Patient</b></p>	<p><b>Take Care of Yourself</b></p>	<p><b>Use Your Resources</b></p>

barriers



# Attachment and Development



## **Attachment Affects BRAIN Development**

When babies are born, their brains are still developing. A baby's brain comes ready to adjust to whatever type of world she finds, whether that's a loving, secure place or a frightening or chaotic one. Her brain develops based on what is usual in her world, what kind of experiences she has over and over again. Her brain forms a pattern of relating to the world around her built on these experiences.

## **Attachments are a Baby's Pattern for Relationships!**

When her new brain develops in a loving and gentle environment, it makes a pattern to be loving and gentle, and that pattern stays with her forever. She learns to relate to other people by the way she is treated when she is young and her brain is still developing.

## **Attachment Affects EMOTIONAL Development**

Without attachment, a child could have difficulty understanding what other people are feeling and may not be able to put himself into someone else's place. He might find it difficult sometimes to even know his own feelings, and may have a very hard time acting appropriately on those feelings.

## **Attachment Affects SOCIAL Development**

If a child has a poorly developed pattern for the way people treat each other, she could have problems forming or maintaining friendships. However, a child with a secure attachment that serves as her pattern for relationships is better prepared to relate to other children. How parents interact with their children is a key factor in how children develop social skills.



# Attachment and Learning

Are you concerned about whether or not your child will be ready for school? Do you want to do everything you can to make sure your child is ready to learn? If you answered "Yes!", then attachment is for YOU! **There is no better way to prepare your child for school than to make sure she is securely attached.**

Securely attached children are better prepared for school because:

- 
- 
- 
- 

# learning

Children who have a low opinion of themselves, feel nervous or uneasy around others, and are uninterested in the things around them have a difficult time getting along in a classroom, listening or even caring about what is being taught. Attachment is a lifelong learning gift you give your child, and best of all, it's free! **When children feel good about themselves, feel good about other people, and are interested in the world around them, they are more ready to learn.**

## Benefits of Attachment

### Adults who have secure attachments to their children:

- Want to provide loving care until the babies are old enough to care for themselves.
- Are better prepared to care deeply and lovingly for their children.
- Will have more fulfilling relationships with their children throughout their lives.

### Adults who were securely attached as children:

- Have a more balanced view of their parents.
- Are better able to have committed relationships.
- Have more stable and long-term romantic relationships with other adults.
- Are more likely to have secure attachments with their own children.

### Children who are securely attached are more likely to:

- Do well in school and in future achievements.
- Make friends easily.
- Be flexible and resilient.
- Spend time with peers and have more positive relationships with them.
- Develop higher self-esteem.
- Be cooperative, positive and enthusiastic.
- Be comfortable with hugs and kisses.

# Socialization



## Stages of Friendship:

### Infants and Toddlers

Relationships with adults are most important.  
Parallel play with peers

### A child's ability to make friends depends greatly on:

- the child's self image
- how well a child communicates
- having behavior that encourages friendship
- a child's use of social skills

### Preschoolers

See playmates as friends  
Begin to choose friends on the basis of who they see regularly  
Friendship ends if there is a fight or friend moves away

### The power of preschool friendships:

- Children who have positive friendships in preschool are more likely to have positive relationships in grade school.
- Children who have difficulty with friendships in preschool are more likely to experience later academic difficulties, rejection or neglect by school age peers.
- Reality – about half of children's requests to play with peers are greeted by rejection.

### Parental Influence on Friendships and Social Skills:

- Parental responsiveness and nurturance are key factors in development of children's social competence.
- Playing with children frequently gives children more advanced social skills and ability to get along better with peers – especially when parents play in a positive and peer-like way.
- Parents of the most socially competent children laugh and smile often, avoid criticism of their child during play, are responsive to their child's idea and not too directive.

### List two ways you can play with your child during your regular schedule and model social skills:

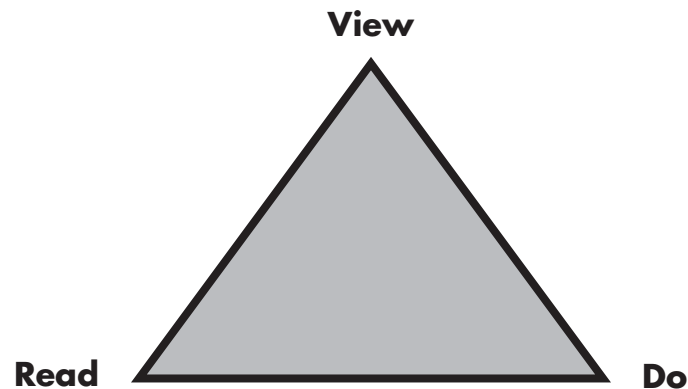
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# Television as a Tool

Throughout this Guide to Attachment, there are many references to television viewing habits for children. TV is a tool – and what children get from it will depend on how well it's designed and how well children are guided to use it. Watching television should not make your job harder as a parent or caregiver!

Know what your children are watching. What do they learn from these shows? Talk with them about the shows they watch. Not knowing what your children are watching is like inviting a stranger into your home (who may or may not share your same values). Balance how much time your children spend watching television. Limit viewing to 10 hours or less a week, making sure that children have plenty of other fun activities to choose from.

View-Read-Do Model



Follow these simple steps:

- **View** an educational children's show with your child that introduces and explores a topic.
- **Read** a related book that reinforces literacy or other learning skills.
- **Do** something fun and active that extends the learning and helps children practice self-expression and listening skills.

The View-Read-Do model is an educationally sound way to use television with children.

\*This information is recommended by the Ready to Learn Department of PBS.



## Now What?



Remember, attachment forms **over time**. Missing one opportunity will not prevent you and your child from becoming securely attached, but a pattern of missed opportunities might!

**Ask yourself: What can I do to help my child know how much I care for her and love her, and how important she is to me?** This is a lot simpler than you might think. Think about the times when you are with your child but not interacting with her.

A gentle touch, a kind word, a listening ear, a helping hand - children need these! Keep in mind that babies may not understand words, but they do understand the way words are said.

**Ask yourself: What can I do to keep from feeling overwhelmed?** Life is busy, and it is sometimes difficult to choose attachment-building responses to children. When you are feeling irritated or hurried, remember: It is okay to take a time-out yourself sometimes! Call a friend or relative who may be able to watch your child while you take a walk, have a bubble bath or some other activity to relax and recharge. If stress causes you to miss an opportunity to connect with your child, don't beat yourself up! Make a mental note and promise to not miss the same one next time.

**Your goal is to provide your child with a stable environment in which he feels loved, cared for, safe and valued.**

# Characteristics of Attachment



Children have **different attachment needs** at different ages. Choosing age-appropriate interactions is crucial to attachment.

Attachment happens differently for:

**Babies**      **Toddlers**      **Preschoolers**      **Special Needs Children**

## **Remember, attachment is a relationship between two people.**

Attachment is sometimes called a “reciprocal relationship” because it takes participation on the part of **both** the adult and the child. Because adults are able to make choices about how they behave and react, much of the responsibility of forming secure attachments falls on adults. We **choose** how we respond to an infant and the way in which we interact with her.

## **Choosing our reactions is a big part of attachment.**

Keep in mind infants have not **learned** how to choose their responses yet! In fact, this is one of the most important functions of attachment: to teach children to make healthy and positive choices in their interactions with other people. Through attachment relationships early in their lives, children learn to do just that.

# Attachment Behaviors of Children:



<b>Baby</b>	<b>Toddler</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gazing into your eyes</li><li>• Snuggling close</li><li>• Smiling</li><li>• Crying to get your attention</li><li>• Reaching to you</li><li>• Being soothed when you hold her</li><li>• Exploring his world</li><li>• Playing peek-a-boo</li><li>• Having needs met when she is hungry, wet, or unhappy</li><li>• Being reassured by hearing your voice or seeing you when he awakens in the night crying</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having opportunities to make choices</li><li>• Exploring his world</li><li>• Reaching for adults when fearful</li><li>• Doing things himself</li></ul>
<b>Preschooler</b>	<b>Special Needs Children</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playing with new friends</li><li>• Coming to parents with fears and concerns</li><li>• Trying new things with adults there to support</li><li>• Learning new things</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gazing into your eyes</li><li>• Snuggling close</li><li>• Smiling</li><li>• Crying to get your attention</li><li>• Reaching to you</li><li>• Head or hand movements in your direction</li><li>• Being soothed when you hold her</li></ul>

# Attachment and Children with Disabilities



**All children need loving, secure relationships.** If your child has a disability, attachment may not occur in the same way, but it does occur. A child can feel the love and care you give him even if he is unable to verbally communicate. Children with disabilities do form attachments! Children with disabilities will also be assisted in their development by secure attachments.

**Children attach in many ways!** Children born with disabilities may be unable to be held, require alternative feeding methods, may be unresponsive or may be unable to see, speak, walk or do many of the things that help attachment relationships grow and develop, but parents and caregivers can find other avenues to closer relationships. Attachments are often developed through creativity and determination.

**Developing a relationship with your child can be challenging.** Parents may feel disappointment, guilt or sadness with their child. These feelings are common but can negatively impact your ability to develop an attachment with your child. Finding someone to talk with, such as a counselor or support group of parents of children with similar disabilities, will help you understand your feelings and work through them and will help you know you are not alone.

**Be realistic.** While it is good to set goals and have expectations for your child, it is also important to be honest and truthful with yourself and your child. By being realistic about who your child is, you can concentrate on helping your child achieve his best instead of worrying about what he can and cannot do.

**Stick with it!** Every interaction and each moment you spend with your child promotes attachment. Remember, attachment is a process over time. She needs to feel your touch, even if you cannot hold her. She needs to hear your voice, even if she cannot understand the words you say. If your child is in the hospital, be persistent about visits. Your persistence and reliability will promote attachment. All children need secure attachments to develop to their full potential.

# Childcare and Attachment



Sometimes, parents are surprised by the way their child becomes attached to a particular caregiver or teacher at childcare or school. A parent may be afraid that the caregiver might “take her place” in her child’s heart. Nothing could be further from the truth!

## **It is important for your child to become attached to his caregiver.**

This attachment helps him to develop socially and emotionally with other people. The consistent care your child’s teacher provides him helps him to feel good about school, learning and friends.

## **When your child becomes attached to her caregiver, pat yourself on the back!**

Chances are, she is even more attached to you. She is able to form a relationship with her teacher because she first learned how with you!

## **Talk to your child’s caregivers about attachment.**

Encourage teachers to be consistent, gentle, responsive and nearby when your child needs them. Working together, you can help your child build a good foundation for the future.

## **If possible, choose care settings where there are more adults and fewer children.**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends “that all groups have at least two teachers. Infants should be in groups of no more than 6 to 8 children; 2- to 3-year-olds should be in groups of 10 to 14 children; and 4- to 5-year-olds should be in groups of 16 to 20 children.” (2001, Washington: NAEYC)



# Tips for Developing Attachment with Infants



## Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage all family members to talk to baby
- Allow older siblings to help with the baby
- Make sure you can hear baby in his crib.
- Encourage family and friends to give baby time to get used to them before holding and hugs
- Make sure baby has time with all adults in the home

## Learning, Childcare and School

- Tell baby about things he sees and feels
- Put baby on the floor to explore and move
- Choose child care with a low child-staff ratio
- Make sure caregiver is loving and holds baby often
- Encourage him to crawl and explore.
- Give him time to adjust to a new childcare setting
- Be sure that she has a consistent caregiver that is usually there

## Activities and Television

- Read to baby while nursing or feeding
- Respond when baby makes sounds
- Gaze into babies eyes
- Smile, talk, play, and sing
- Touch and massage
- Use your face to show an emotion and then say what it is

## Guidance and Discipline

- Respond when babies cry - it will not spoil this age
- Learn which cries mean hunger, anger or boredom
- Soothe baby with cuddling, swaddling, quiet music, or a walk in a stroller
- Reassure her when she cries and is fearful of strangers
- Don't scold
- Involve family in entertaining baby when you are busy

# Tips for Developing Attachment with Toddlers



## Friends, Family and Home

- Ask adults to allow him time if he acts shy before hugs and holding
- Encourage siblings to include her in play
- Involve him in a small playgroup or with another child occasionally
- Toddler-proof your home carefully
- Tell your child if you are leaving

## Learning, Childcare and School

- Choose childcare that is nurturing and loving and uses positive guidance instead of punishment
- Give him words for things he sees and is doing
- Give her many new experiences and chances to practice walking, running, using her hands and fingers

## Activities and Television

- Limit TV and sit with him to watch
- Read, read, read with her in your lap or close
- Take him to playground, on outings
- Let her try new things

## Guidance and Discipline

- Allow him to do things himself, such as opening doors
- Limit the use of "no"
- Give her more than one choice when you want her to do some thing. Make bedtime, bath, and putting on clothes a game
- Have a sense of humor

# Tips for Developing Attachment with Preschoolers

## Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage friendships by inviting children to your home and setting up play dates
- Encourage play that is noncompetitive
- Call to reassure your child, if he is away from home overnight
- When possible, allow an upset or frightened child to return home

## Learning, Childcare and School

- Choose childcare that uses positive discipline and emphasizes caring relationships with teachers and children
- Let teachers know you want them to hug your child
- Make sure your child's learning is supported and there is someone available to help him if he becomes frustrated

## Activities and Television

- Be sure you or a supportive adult is there to help him with new learning such as swimming, a new game, etc.
- Read to your child by having her in your lap or next to you
- Cuddle and give hugs

## Guidance and Discipline

- Show her how to do new things, then let her know you are there and will keep her safe while she tries on her own
- When you discipline, always end with a hug and reassurance
- Use a calm voice when you discipline, and use consequences for bad behavior

# Tips for Developing Attachment with Special Needs Children



## Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage all family members to visit her during hospitalizations
- Encourage siblings to help with the child.
- Develop family time activities that can include all children
- Be honest and open with family and friends about his abilities and needs

## Learning, Childcare and School

- Make sure care givers are trained and experienced in disabilities
- Ask teachers to help you identify the type of interactions to which she reacts best
- Choose care with more teachers and fewer children
- Be sure that he has a consistent caregiver that is usually there for him

## Activities and Television

- Read, sing and talk to your child every day and often
- Respond when she makes sounds or movements
- Smile at him
- Touch and massage him
- Limit television

## Guidance and Discipline

- Learn to recognize when your child's behavior is his way of showing you his needs
- Learn which cries mean hunger, anger or boredom

## Developing a Loving Relationship

Think **LOVE** to develop a caring, attached relationship with your child.

**L**et your child know you love him with hugs, kisses, holding, touching and smiles as often as you can!

**O**ffer her security and support by being there for her when she is learning new things, when she is sad or upset, as well as happy.

**V**ocalize your feelings to your child. Tell him daily how much you love him and care about him, and how important he is to you.

**E**ven when you are angry and upset, use patience, and let her know that you don't like the behavior, but you **LOVE** her!

## Additional Resources on Attachment Web sites:

### **Ready for Life: [www.readyforlife.org](http://www.readyforlife.org)**

Provided by KERA public television, this site offers a wealth of resources on parenting and children.

### **University of North Texas Center for Parent Education: [www.unt.edu/cpe](http://www.unt.edu/cpe)**

A site with resources for parents and parent educators with links to many other sites and information such as parenting book reviews, "Ask-a-Parent Educator," and "Search for a Parent Educator" which allow you to search for Texas parent educators in your area according to topic and language.

### **I Am Your Child: [www.iamyourchild.org](http://www.iamyourchild.org)**

This site offers parents information that relates the latest brain research to what parents can do to nurture their children. It has information and links to many resources.

### **PBS Ready To Learn: [www.pbs.org/kids/home\\_readytolearn.html](http://www.pbs.org/kids/home_readytolearn.html)**

You will find information about children and learning from leading authorities on learning and children.

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children: [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)**

NAEYC is an association for professionals in early childhood education that offers resources to professionals and parents, including information on accredited child care programs in their area and assistance in locating quality child care.

### **Zero to Three: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)**

This organization focuses on the development of children from 0-3 and provides materials and links for parents and professionals.

### **Child Trauma Academy: [www.bcm.tmc.edu/cta](http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/cta)**

Dr. Bruce Perry, who appears the video used in this workshop, offers many resources and information on children and their development.

## **Additional Resources on Attachment Books:**

Brazelton, T. B., Bertrand, G. (1991). The earliest relationship: parents, infants, and the drama of early attachment. New York: Perseus.

Brazelton, T. Berry (1983). Infants and mothers: differences in development. New York: Dell.

Bowlby, J. (1990). A secure base: parent-child attachment and healthy human development. New York: Basic Books.

Greenspan, Stanley (1999). Building healthy minds. New York: Perseus Books.

Heath, H. (2000). Using your values to raise your child to be an adult you admire. Seattle: Parenting Press, Inc.

Karen, Robert (1998). Becoming attached: first relationships and how they affect our capacity to love. New York: Oxford University Press

## feeling loved

Understanding the process of attachment and socialization will help you develop a loving relationship with your child or the children in your care. By creating a strong relationship with your child, you will give him the skills to build relationships with others.

Attachment can be fostered by a mother, father, sibling, childcare provider, grandparent or any other consistent caregiver. Attachment and socialization begin at birth and continue throughout life. The way a parent responds to a baby's cries, the way a childcare worker speaks to the baby, the way their room is organized, the toys a child is given, the people the child spends time with, all contribute to a young child's socialization. We will explore ways that adults can build the bonds of attachment with children.

Learning to be a good friend and to get along with others is called "socialization." From the moment your child is born, she is a social creature. She needs you to talk to her and play with her. When you spend time with your baby and respond to her needs, you are helping her learn to love you. We'll talk about the solid foundation you can create - one that will help your child to socialize - to make good friends and play well because of the solid foundation you have created.

For information about other curriculum materials and training opportunities contact Ready for Life, 3000 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas, TX 75201 or visit our website at [www.readyforlife.org](http://www.readyforlife.org).

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