

Attachment



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MindEd

e-learning to support young healthy minds

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Attachment



Attachment is a word that is often used by Mental Health professionals.



It is a word that means a strong connection between people over a long time.



It is part of the relationship between a child and its parent.



For some babies the parent has always been ready to comfort them in the right way.



These babies will form a **secure attachment**. This is a good form of attachment. They are more likely to make friends at school.



Other parents may not be able to give the baby what they want for different reasons.



These babies may form an **insecure attachment**. This is not such a good form of attachment.



Usually this is not a problem. It may mean that the child can deal with their carers better. It can be difficult for them in other situations.

Can you see attachment?



You can see attachment in very young children. They need to stay close to their parents to keep them safe.



It is not so easy to see in older children.

Attachment problems



Sometimes a professional might say that your child has attachment problems.



This could mean a lot of different things. You should ask the professional to explain.

When is attachment a problem?

There are 2 very uncommon mental health problems which are to do with attachment:-



The reactive attachment disorder (RAD)

This happens when a child has been neglected in the first few years of life.



Children in this situation usually recover very quickly once they are living with carers who are able to meet their needs.



Disinhibited Attachment Disorder (DAD)

This happens when a child doesn't look for comfort from one special person. They will go to anyone - including strangers.

Ways to help

Here are some ideas to help a child that has attachment problems:-



- ▶ Be patient, loving and understanding.



- ▶ Be calm, but firm – it will help your child to learn to trust. This may take some time.



- ▶ Tell your child how well they are doing when there are small improvements.



- ▶ It is very important to help your child to feel safe.



- ▶ Set out clear rules of behaviour.



- ▶ React to your child's behaviour in the same way all the time. React to your child's bad behaviour in the same way all the time. This helps them to know what to expect when they act in a certain way.



- ▶ Make sure they can count on you whatever happens.



- ▶ It takes a long time. Focus on the small steps.

For more information

This resource is part of the MindEd online learning site. For more information contact:-



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