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Infant Behavior and Development

INFANT BEHAVIOR AND DEVELOPMENT

Infants have a tendency to prefer one care provider to another under distress. For instance, if the mother is the primary caregiver, the infant feels more attached to her than it feels to its father. The primary caregiver refers to the parent with whom the child spends most of its time with.

When a child is in pursuit of closeness or physical contact for that matter, they prefer the individual who is more likely to be responsible for them when they are sick or when hurt. When separated from their caretakers babies appear to be in discomfort. Studies by Colin and Lamb (1976) reveal that most 12- to 19-month-old babies display distal interaction directed towards their mothers as opposed to their fathers and other childcare providers since mothers spend more time with their children than anyone else. On the basis of ethological theory, Bowlby elaborates that infants in search of closeness or physical contact with is merely an evolutionary adaptation.

Children will always prefer to be in the company of the person they feel most comfortable with, regardless of their gender. If, for example the toddler felt secure in the presence of their father, then that is where he or she will seek solace. Nonetheless, there comes a time when children modify their preference for a specific care provider.

Results of the study reveal that mothers spend more time with the toddlers than do their fathers. Only a small percentage of fathers spend more time with their children than their wives. Mothers gained higher ratings for their care providing duties.

When distressed, attachment security of the toddlers does not relate to their

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preference of one parent to the other. It relates to the quality of the child's recovery from distress. For instance, as a child with insecure attachment to a parent might approach that parent and keep whining, a child with secure attachment to a parent is mostly obtains comfort from distress. This leads to positive engagement with that parent.

In the nursing career, this knowledge is essential as it helps in examining the stability of a young child's hierarchical preferences. It also deepens the comprehension of the way children arrange their attachment characteristics.

References

Umemura, T., Jacobvitz, D., Messina, S., & Hazen, N. (2012). Do toddlers prefer the primary caregiver or the parent with whom they feel more secure? The role of toddler emotion. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 36, 102-114.