

# Effects of positive relationships and barriers to attachments in children



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Evaluate the effect on children and young people of having positive relationships during periods of transition.

A 'transition' is defined as the process or the period of changing from one state/condition to another (Oxford Dictionaries, 2019). When considering the effect of transition on children and young people, I believe it is crucial to perceive a transition in any circumstance of life as a process rather than an upcoming event. Stability is essential in a child's early years however, change is often unavoidable as they will inevitably experience numerous emotional, physical, intellectual, physiological and environmental transitions throughout childhood, puberty, adolescence and finally into adulthood. In unfortunate circumstances, a number of these transitions will be induced by events such as divorce, bereavement, new siblings, step families, moving house and school etc. (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994), and therefore elicit stress and other negative emotions on the child/young person. This therefore highlights the importance of having positive relationships in place during these periods of transition. The main effect of this on children/young people is to ease the process and achieve the best possible outcome, with the least possible disruptions to care and daily routine.

In order to successfully function within society, children/young people need to learn and develop the capacity to form and maintain relationships. Having the ability to form these positive relationships appropriately is a key component to having a mentally healthy state of mind and a positive sense of well-being. This is true for both children and young people and thus provides an important framework in developing future relationships.

Typically, all parents/caregivers will have a relationship with their child

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however it's the quality of this relationship that will have an impact both at present and later in life. Relationships should be consistent and sensitive to ensure that secure attachments are made. When considering periods of transition, the early years of life are crucial. As children/young people begin to transition into adolescence, it is expected that changes in mentality will have a positive impact on the quality of parent-child relationships. As children begin to experience the transition from childhood to adolescence, significant adults (often parents) are able to make adjustments accordingly that can alleviate stresses and strains in the relationship. Additionally, as children make this transition, they are likely to experience the same roles and responsibilities as their significant adults, resulting in a common understanding (Thornton et al., 1995).

Positive relationships between parents/caregivers and practitioners are fundamental for a successful transition, particularly when in school/residential settings. These positive relationships allow for a clear dialogue between the parents/caregivers and the practitioner, resulting in the exchange of valuable information as well as opportunities to extend ideas and educational experiences within the setting. As importantly, parents/caregivers will find comfort in positive relationships, specifically with those caring for their child. In addition to this, separation anxiety affects both adults and children and so visible exchanges between significant adults is deeply reassuring to the child/young person in providing a sense of security when in the process of transitioning.

Following on from this, when transitioning from one environment to another, it is vital to ensure that handovers between parents/caregivers and <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-positive-relationships-and-barriers-to-attachments-in-children/>

practitioners are well planned and efficient to ensure that the child's needs are met adequately and that new attachments are strengthened. Failing to do so will increase the risk of children/young people losing their sense of security and as a result, begin to regress in knowledge and understanding of their situation. Post transition, allowing for one-to-one time with a new key individual in an unfamiliar environment will encourage a greater sense of security for the child/young person, as well as providing comfort and reassurance. Routines and activities that also encourage shared endeavour are invaluable to children in laying the foundations to new friendships and solidifying that sense of security. In order for healthy development to continue, children and young people should experience safety and security in a stable environment, regardless of that being with families or in care.

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Analyse factors in the life of a child or young person which can present barriers to forming positive attachments.

Failure to develop and maintain positive attachments for children/young people can have extremely detrimental effects both at present and later in

life. There are many barriers which can prevent these attachments from forming including previous hostile/dysfunctional relationships, frequent imposed transition, trauma, grief and loss as well as disability. Across the UK, significant changes to the care system have been put into practice to reassess the services available for children/young people in residential care. These changes have primarily been brought about through the introduction of models that allow for a greater understanding of the importance of positive relationships and attachments and the impacts that these have on children and young people.

When considering children/young people in a residential setting, it is imperative to keep in mind that previous relationships will have often been fractured, chaotic, violent and abusive. The attachment relationships these children and young people will have held previously are likely to have been disrupted and regardless of the negative impacts these relationships will inevitably have on children/young people, they may still wish to maintain their relationships with those who have mistreated them and be reluctant to form new, healthy relationships. There is evidence to suggest that secure attachment relationships contribute to the healthy emotional development of children, thus providing them with skills, competence, the capacity to regulate emotions, understand others and to form healthy relationships (Shemmings, 2011). Where a secure attachment relationship has failed to form, children often find it difficult to trust adults due to their previous negative and often abusive encounters (Leeson, 2007). These feelings tend to be re-occurring due to the frequent changes in significant adults providing care, a time frame inadequate to form substantial relationships and finally by

professional decisions being made regarding the lives of children/young people in which they may not agree with when in care.

Following on from this, there are circumstances in which children/young people value planned opportunities to develop stable and meaningful relationships however, often face difficulties in developing and maintaining them. Transitioning both entering and leaving residential settings is a challenging process for all involved and so the need for supportive relationships is critical for children/young people during this period. These relationships help them to manage the demands and strains of this particular transition. Additionally, prior to children/young people entering residential care, it is possible that unhealthy coping mechanisms may have developed that result in them being less likely to take the opportunities to form relationships through fear of rejection (Reimer, 2010).

Contrary to this, the perspective of professionals/significant adults presents other possible barriers in the development and permanence of positive relationships. Research suggests that there is inadequate training and tools available to develop relationships, a reluctance to develop relationships due to fear of complaint and the possibility of adverse emotional impacts on those working with children/young people in residential settings (SWIA, 2006). In addition to this, common management styles tend to reproduce objective and emotionally detached ways of working (Ruch, 2012). This therefore creates boundaries in the formation of secure attachments between those working under specific management styles and young people.

Relationships should be preserved, protected and nurtured including association and contact with family where appropriate. Particularly for <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-positive-relationships-and-barriers-to-attachments-in-children/>

children/young people, relationships should be perceived as networks, displaying that some significant adults can become more prominent in the lives of children at different points (Care Inquiry, 2013). This can be achieved through planned opportunities to develop appropriate and affectionate relationships with new carers/significant adults alongside maintaining previous relationships.

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