

What is attachment in childhood and why is it important

[Psychology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What is Attachment in Childhood and Why is it Important? Mary Ainsworth, a renowned psychologist, came up with an experiment referred to as the situation experiment which would be used to determine the different kinds of attachment that exists in infants between 12 and 18 months. There were seven stages observed. Each stage lasted for a total of three minutes. The research mostly focused on how the children reacted every time they were left alone after a while then later on returned to their mothers (News & Cochran, 2006, 18).

In the first stage, the mother and the infant were left together in a room so that the infant can get used to the new environment. In the second stage, after the infant and the mother have adjusted to the new environment, a stranger gets into the room and joins them. In the third stage, the mother exits the room and the baby is left solely with the stranger. At the fourth stage, the mother comes back into the room and the stranger leaves. In stage five, the mother leaves the room again and the child is left on their own. In stage six, the stranger reenters the room. In the last stage, the mother comes into the room and the stranger leaves.

From the results of the experiment, Ainsworth came to the conclusion that the behavior depicted by the infants in the experiment had a lot to do with the care giver, in this case the mother. Based on the responses observed, Ainsworth came up with three stages of attachment: secure attachment, avoidant insecure attachment and ambivalent-insecure attachment.

Secure Attachment

Securely attached children tend to explore the room freely when the mother is around. The child is likely to be distressed when the mother leaves, and

will not be so eager to explore the environment in her absence. The child cannot be easily comforted by a stranger. When the mother returns, the child is happy. In addition, in any instance the child is sad or afraid; he approaches his mother and is comforted with a hug. This shows that the child knows trusts the mother enough to know that he can depend on her while under any kind of stress (Nicholls, Piergrossi, Gibertoni & Daniel, 2013, 92).

Avoidant – Insecure Attachment

The child with this kind of attachment is not as eager to explore the environment. Additionally, the child does not show any observable emotion whenever the mother leaves. There is no observable preference for his mother over another stranger. When the mother returns, the child is likely to completely avoid her or ignore her.

Ambivalent- Insecure Attachment

Similar to the avoidant child, a child with ambivalent- insecure attachment does not also explore the environment as much in the absence of the mother. However, the differing characteristic with the avoidant child is that the ambivalent child gets rather distressed in the absence of the mother and cannot be easily comforted by a stranger. When the mother returns, the child can be said to be ambivalent. Although she partly wants to reconnect with the mother, she may be a little resistant and angry at the mother for leaving her in the first place. Consequently, the child will likely seem resistant to the mother's advances for a while (Kleinman, 2012, 72).

Why is childhood attachment important?

According to research, the kind of attachment most people have as infants

profoundly affects their general behavior in the future. For instance, children who are securely attached to their parents tend to have a higher self esteem in the future as compared to those who do not. Furthermore, they seem to be more independent and responsible in nature. There are numerous benefits that accrue to the child with secure attachment. These include capability to regulate emotion in a stressful situation, have the confidence to freely explore the environment and the attachment can be helpful in fostering their language, cognitive and emotional development (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010, 59). Furthermore, children who form secure attachment are likely to predispose of positive social behaviors.

Lack of secure attachment may have deterring effects on a person's behavior in future. The main cause of insecure attachments is as a result of the kind of parenting style or the parent's behavior. However, this does not mean that parenting can be solely the cause of insecure attachment in children.

Bibliography

DEINER, P. L., & DEINER, P. L. (2010). Inclusive early childhood education: development, resources, and practice. Belmont, CA, Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

KLEINMAN, P. (2012). Psych 101: psychology facts, basics, statistics, tests, and more! Avon, Mass, Adams Media.

NEW, R. S., & COCHRAN, M. (2006). Early childhood education [four volumes]: an international encyclopedia. Westport, Conn, Praeger Publishers.

NICHOLLS, L., PIERGROSSI, J. C., GIBERTONI, C. D. S., & DANIEL, M. A. (2013).

<https://assignbuster.com/what-is-attachment-in-childhood-and-why-is-it-important/>

Psychoanalytic thinking in occupational therapy: symbolic, relational, and transformative.

SHAFFER, D. R., & KIPP, K. (2010). *Developmental psychology: childhood and adolescence*. Belmont, CA, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.