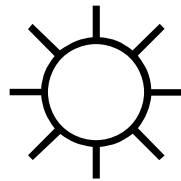


Mommy! Daddy! *Don't Leave Me!*

How Temperament and Attachment Affect Separation in the Infant and Toddler Rooms



**Presented by
*Susan Meriwether***

MOMENTS MATTER!

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John Bowlby's Four Broad Phases of Attachment Formation

John Bowlby, a well renowned child development theorist, conceived that attachment functions to provide a balance between children's need for safety and their need for varied learning experiences. Attachment normally develops through four broad phases during the first two years of life.

1. *The pre-attachment phase* (birth to 6 weeks) – Infants and caregivers are working out the initial systems of coordination. They stay in close proximity with the caregivers who offer them food and comfort. When left alone with an unfamiliar caregiver, they do not seem to get upset.
2. *The "attachment in the making" phase* (6 weeks to 6-8 months) – Infants begin to respond differently to familiar and unfamiliar people. By the time they are around 6 or 7 months old they start to show signs of wariness when confronted with unfamiliar people.
3. *The "clear-cut attachment" phase* (6-8 months to 18-24 months) – Children display full-blown **separation anxiety** during this period. They become visibly upset when their mother or other caregiver leaves the room.
4. *The phase of reciprocal relationships* (18-24 months) – As the child becomes more mobile, he/she spends more increasing time away from the mother or caregiver. Every so often, either the mother or child will interrupt what they were doing to renew contact with one another. The pair enters a reciprocal state in which they share responsibility for maintaining the equilibrium of the relationship.

Four Main Categories of Temperament

Temperament is how a child reacts to different situations. Children's reactions vary greatly when making the separation from home to childcare or when they are in the stage of separation anxiety. Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas named the first three types of temperament. Through their research they were able to follow 136 children from toddlerhood into adulthood. The fourth temperament category was introduced when researchers found that consistent high activity is part of a child's temperament.

1. **Easy temperament** – Child is very flexible with changes, mild/moderate in emotional reactions.
Handling separation – Child often waves good bye to parent, joins others in play, happy and goes with the flow.
2. **Slow to warm up** – Child takes a while to adapt, tends to withdraw at first, not very active, in the most general form these children are shy.
Handling separation – Child will often hide behind parent until they are gone. At separation they can show high stress or anxious behavior. It is important for caregivers to understand that this behavior is part of the child's temperament. These children need time and space. Caregivers should be emotionally available to help them with the separation process.
3. **Difficult/Challenging** – Child withdraws from new situations, often has difficulty adapting, can get into bad mood easily, intense emotional reaction.
Handling separation – These children will often have the hardest time dealing with separation. Read their body cues to discover ways to comfort them. Sometimes separation with these children can take up to six weeks of consistent routines.
4. **Active** – Child has very high activity level, usually adapts well, very persistent, not easily distractible.
Handling separation – These children usually handle separation easily because they are so interested in what the environment offers. Parents can be the ones who handle the separation harder because they often feel their child doesn't notice them leaving or care if they are gone. Caregivers need to turn their attention to the parents to help them understand their child's behavior is of curiosity, not of not caring.

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Five Human Qualities which can make a Difference Every Day

Patience
Perseverance
Tolerance
Optimism
Commitment

Signs of Success

As a caregiver you know you have succeeded in gaining trust and forming a strong bond with a child when the child

- Reaches out to you to be picked up.
- Relaxes and molds comfortably to your body when you hold her.
- Leans into your body when you read to him.
- Accepts your gentle touches.
- Climbs on you, clings to you to regain emotional balance.
- Looks up occasionally to check for your presence when playing across the room.
- Becomes stressed when he notices you are not in the room.
- Runs to you, her safe base, to "refuel", then returns to play.
- Takes your hand in new or unfamiliar circumstances.
- Calms down at your reassuring touch or words.
- Is cooperative and compliant with your requests and directions.
- Looks into your eyes when you crouch down to talk to him.
- Talks to you truthfully about the bad as well as the good.

When an infant or toddler displays a number of these behaviors, they are forming a secure attachment to you. As caregivers we need to be warm, responsive and reliable.

Reading Suggestions

Books to Read with Children

Oh My Baby, Little One by K. Appelt
Goodbye, Hello by S. Rodde
Owl Babies by M. Waddell
The Kissing Hand & A Pocketful of Kisses by A. Penn
Shawn Goes To School by P. Breinburg
The Runaway Bunny by M.W. Brown
Don't Forget to Come Back by R. Harris
Willy Bear by M. Kantrowitz
Going to Day Care by F. Rogers

Books for Parents and Caregivers

Secure Relationships by A. Honig
Becoming Attached by R. Karen
The Earliest Relationship by T. Brazelton and B. Cramer
A Secure Base by J. Bowlby
Separation by K. Jervis
The First Years – A Parent & Caregiver's Guide to Helping Children Learn by J. Go, J. Pozmantier, L. Segal
The Comprehensive Infant Curriculum by K. Albrecht & L. Miller
The Comprehensive Toddler Curriculum by K. Albrecht & L. Miller

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