Attachment to Others
and Development of Self

How Children Develop
Chapter 11

Themes:

• Nature and Nurture
• The Active Child
• The Sociocultural Context
• Individual Differences
• Research and Children’s Welfare
Attachment

- Definition: An emotional bond with a specific person that is enduring across time and space

- **Harlow** and the Rhesus Monkeys
  - Rhesus monkeys at birth were isolated from other monkeys
  - At 6 months the isolated rhesus monkeys showed many socially disturbing behaviors
  - This research showed the value of early social interactions

Attachment Theory

- **Bowlby’s** Attachment Theory
  - Infants use their primary caregiver as a *secure base*

  - The Attachment Process:
    - is based on ethological theory
    - focuses on the innate basis of attachment
    - looks at the quality of attachments with caregivers
Stages of the Attachment Process

**Preattachment**
- Birth–6 weeks
- Innate signals that bring the caregiver

**Attachment-in-the-making**
- 6 weeks – 6/8 months
- The child forms expectations about how the caregiver will respond

**Clear-cut attachment**
- 6/8 months – 1 1/2 – 2 years
- Child seeks contact with caregiver (secure base); *Separation protest / distress*

**Reciprocal relationships**
- From 1 1/2 or 2 years on
- Mutually regulated relationships

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I love you because……..

- Psychoanalytic:
- Learning Theory:
- Cognitive:
- Ethological:
- Contact Comfort:
Psychoanalytic: “I love you because you feed me.” (Freudian)

Learning Theory:

Cognitive:

Ethological:

Contact Comfort:

Ainsworth’s Work

• This work looks at the security of an infant’s attachment

• *The Strange Situation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Attachment Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caregiver/child enter room</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caregiver/child alone</td>
<td>Caregiver as secure base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stranger enters</td>
<td>Reaction to stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Child and stranger</td>
<td>Separation distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Caregiver returns/stranger leaves</td>
<td>Stranger comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Child alone</td>
<td>Reunion reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stranger enters</td>
<td>Stranger comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Caregiver returns</td>
<td>Reunion reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ainsworth’s 3 Attachment Categories

- **Secure**
  - Caregiver is a
  - Child shows some distress when caregiver leaves
  - Child is glad to see caregiver at reunion

- **Insecure/Resistant or Ambivalent**
  - Child is in the strange situation
  - Child is upset when caregiver leaves
  - Child reestablishes contact, but resists caregiver’s efforts at comfort

- **Insecure/Avoidant**
  - Child avoids strange situations
  - Child does not greet caregiver upon return
  - Child ignores stranger

Some children didn’t fit so…

- **Disorganized/disoriented**
  - Child shows no consistent way of coping
  - Child has a dazed expression
  - Child demonstrates variable behaviors
About two-thirds of middle-class American children are securely attached. In addition to the insecurely attached children depicted in the chart, less than 5% of children—those who previously were designated as insecure/avoidant or insecure/resistant or were unclassified—are now categorized as disorganized/disoriented children. (Adapted from Thompson, 1998)

Brennan, Clark, & Shaver (1998)
Rate the extent to which it describes how you generally think and feel about close relationships. Think about all your close relationships, past and present,

1 -------- 2 -------- 3 -------- 4 -------- 5
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

(1) I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

(2) I worry about being abandoned.

(3) Just when romantic partners start to get close to me, I find myself pulling away.

(4) I often wish that romantic partners’ feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.

(5) I don’t feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
Parental Attachment Status

• Looks at attachment in a parent’s childhood

• *Autonomous parents*: recall both +/− of childhood

• *Dismissing parents*: insist they cannot remember interactions with parents during childhood or are inconsistent in remembering

• *Preoccupied parents*: recall confused and angry accounts of childhood and do not give coherent descriptions

• *Unresolved/disorganized parents*: suffer from trauma of loss or abuse

Parents with secure adult attachments tend to have securely attached children. (Adapted from van Ijzendoorn, 1995)
Parental Sensitivity

- Can be exhibited in a variety of ways
  - Responsive caregiving when children are distressed or upset
  - Helping children to engage in learning situations by providing just enough, but not too much, guidance and supervision

In a study in the Netherlands, half of a group of mothers of 6-month-old babies at some risk for insecure attachment were randomly assigned to a condition in which sensitivity was trained, with the remaining half in a comparison condition.
Parental Sensitivity

• In a study in the Netherlands, half of a group of mothers of 6-month-old babies at some risk for insecure attachment were randomly assigned to a condition in which sensitivity was trained, with the remaining half in a comparison condition.
  • Three months later, more of the infants of the mothers in the experimental group were securely attached than were those in the control group.
  • The differences in attachment were still apparent when the children were 18 months, 24 months, and 3½ years old.

Culture and Attachment

• Focus on:
  ▪ Child’s independence (Japan – no avoidant)
  ▪ Child-rearing practices
  ▪ Past experiences with strangers or separation
Culture and Attachment

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• Other Factors:
  ▪ Parental sensitivity to distress and play
    ❖ Consistent: secure attachment
    ❖ Inconsistent response time: anxious resistant
    ❖ Less likely to respond: avoidant
  ▪ Temperament

Attachment Across Cultures

• All insecurely attached Japanese infants classified as insecure/resistant
  • This may reflect the emphasis on between Japanese infants and their mothers and Japanese infants’ anger and resentment at being denied contact in the Strange Situation
Long-Term Effects of Attachment

• Focus on:
  ▪ Psychological, social, and cognitive factors

• Secure attachments have been related to:
  ▪ Acceptable emotional expression
  ▪ + peer relations
  ▪ + social skills
  ▪ Greater understanding of other’s emotions
  ▪ Greater sharing
  ▪ Less aggressive and antisocial behavior
  ▪ Closer friends
  ▪ Well liked by others
  ▪ Higher grades

• Lasting?
  ▪ Perhaps if the environment remains constant

NOTE. N = 192. Path values represent standardized regression coefficients.
Conceptions of the Self

- Self: A conceptual system made up of one’s thoughts and attitudes about one’s self, including one’s
  - Body
  - Possessions
  - Thoughts
  - Psychological functioning

**NOTE**: $N = 192$. Path values represent standardized regression coefficients.
The Self

• Conceptual system of one’s thoughts and attitudes about oneself

• Infancy
  ▪ Early in infancy, infants demonstrate a rudimentary sense of self
    ◀ 8 months = separation distress; joint attention

    ◀ 18–20 months = Rouge Test

    ◀ 2 years = picture recognition

    ◀ 2–3 years “terrible twos” = language includes “me” and narrative constructions of life’s events

Self-definition

▶ Between 1½ and 3 years, categorical self develops:

  Self and others classified according to salient differences:

  Boy/girl
  baby/boy/man
  good/bad

▶ 5–7 years: relational understanding (I am the prettiest)

  This is social comparison: how does self compare with others?

▶ 7–9 grade: increasing understanding of opposing perspectives
The Developing Sense of Self

- **Early adolescence**: thinking about the self is characterized by a form of egocentrism called the **personal fable**
  - a story that involves beliefs in the uniqueness of their own feelings and their immortality
- This causes many adolescents to be preoccupied with what others think of them
- The **imaginary audience** refers to the belief that everyone is focused on the adolescent’s appearance and behavior
Sense of Agency (I can affect the world.)

Born with desire for mastery of surroundings

- Infants like to stack, bang, and hold objects
- Early accomplishments accompanied by smiling/laughter
- 2 years: Protest when offered help in task
- 2-3 years: Look to adults after completing task

How do children attribute self-determination and control?

- **Internal locus of control** (My actions impact outcomes.)
  
  Good grades? “I worked hard”
  
  This is known as **strong mastery orientation**

- **External locus of control** (Luck / others control Outcomes)
  
  Poor grades? “Teacher doesn’t like me”
  
  This is known as **learned helplessness**
How do children attribute self-determination and control?

These views affect perspective on other attributes:

- Helpless orientation: traits are stable entities
- Mastery orientation: traits are malleable

Helpless children: compare performance to others
Mastery children: focus on increased effort

Why?

Effects of these traits on later performance

Children often caught in self-fulfilling vicious cycle:

Helpless children: 20% of 5th graders with high ability limit goals.

How to avoid?

1. Avoid frequent criticism of young children
2. Motivate effort by showing how to improve on task
3. Attribute failure to something other than ability
4. View activities as opportunity to learn
Erikson’s *Identity versus Identity Confusion*

- Crisis: make a series of narrowing selection of commitments (personal, occupational…)
- Resolution:
  - *self identity*
  - *identity confusion* (incomplete sense of self)
  - *identity foreclosure* (premature commitment to an identity)
  - *negative identity* (adolescent identifies with the opposite of what is valued by people around him or her)

*Psychosocial moratorium:* during the process of self-disclosure there is a time-out period where adolescents are not expected to take on adult roles and can pursue different activities that lead to self-discovery.
Ethnic Identity

• During childhood, ethnic identity develops slowly
  ▪ Between ages 7–10 = child identifies self by ethnic group
  ▪ Between ages 10–11 = child realizes ethnicity is constant

• During adolescence, the adolescent is more aware of prejudice and begins to explore own ethnicity
Sexual Identity or Orientation

- The majority of adolescents think little of the question

- However, by mid-adolescence sexual minority youths begin to appear (gay, lesbian or bisexual)

- Many will face extra difficulties

Process:
- First recognition
- Test and exploration
- Identity acceptance
- Identity integration

Ages of Identity Milestones for Gay/Bisexual Male Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Mean Age in Years</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percent Who Had Not Experienced the Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of same-sex attractions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3–17</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew meaning of homosexuality</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4–19</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied the term homosexual to own attractions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5–20</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First gay sex</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5–24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First heterosexual sex</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5–22</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized self as gay/bisexual</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8–24</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First disclosed to another</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13–25</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First same-sex romance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11–25</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First disclosed to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13–25</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13–25</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13–25</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed positive sexual identity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10–25</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers do not apply to samples of young men who have not acknowledged their same-sex attractions. Adapted from Table 1.2 in R. Savin-Williams, ... And Then I Became Gay. New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 15.
Self-Esteem

Self-esteem (SE) judgments are those we make about our own worth and feelings associated with those judgments.

Why important?

Children’s self evaluations affect emotional experiences and LT psychological adjustment.

Begins as soon as categorical self contain + and - features.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you think that your parents usually like to hear about your ideas?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you often feel lonely at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do other children often break friends or fall out with you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you like team games?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you think that other children often say nasty things about you?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When you have to say things in front of teachers, do you usually feel shy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you like writing stories or doing creative writing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do you often feel sad because you have nobody to play with at school?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are you good at mathematics?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Are there lots of things about yourself you would like to change?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>When you have to say things in front of other children, do you usually feel foolish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to do things like woodwork or other crafts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>When you want to tell a teacher something, do you usually feel foolish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Do you often have to find new friends because your old friends are playing with someone else?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Do you usually feel foolish when you talk to your parents?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Do other people often think that you tell lies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multiple aspects of self-esteem?

Children develop many self-estees, then integrate them.

Factor analysis used to determine nature of self-esteem:

**Before 7:** social acceptance and competence

**From 7 onward:**
- academic (reading/math)
- physical (ability/appearance)
- social (peers/parents)
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- academic (reading/math)
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Adolescence: + close friendship, romantic appeal, job ability.

Hereditary Factors Related to Self-Esteem

- Physical appearance
- Athletic ability
- Intellectual abilities
- Aspects of personality

Self-esteem is more similar in siblings who are closer genetically (identical twins versus fraternal twins or nontwins).
Social Contributions to Self-Esteem

- Approval and support of others
  - If children feel loved, they believe they are worthy of others’ love and vice versa.
- Children begin to become concerned about parents’ love and approval at about 2 years.
- Accepting and involved parents who use supportive yet firm child-rearing practices tend to have children with higher self-esteem
  - Parents need to condemn and reject the behavior, not the child.
- Peer acceptance is important to self-esteem.
  - Children develop an internalized standard by which to judge themselves.

Appearance and Competence and Self-Esteem

- Attractive individuals are more likely to report high self-esteem than are those who are less attractive.
- Attractive people behave in more socially competent ways.
- Attractive people behave in ways that draw others to them and that are appealing to others.
Appearance and Competence and Self-Esteem

- The association between self-esteem and attractiveness is stronger for girls than for boys, especially in late childhood and adolescence.

- Why?

- Academic success affects self-esteem more than self-esteem affects academic achievement.

School and Neighborhood as Contributors to Self-Esteem

- Living in poverty is associated with lower self-esteem

Why?

Stress, prejudice, and inadequate material and psychological resources in poor neighborhoods.
Self-Esteem in Minority Children

- Minority children are more likely to live in poverty, with consequent effects on self-esteem.

- Self-esteem is higher for Euro-American children than for African-American children until age 10, when the pattern reverses.

  - Why?

Self-Esteem in Minority Children (continued)

- Children in other minority groups show different patterns of self-esteem.

  - Asian-American children have higher self-esteem than do Euro- or African-Americans during elementary school but lower self-esteem than those groups in middle school and high school.

- Family, neighborhood, and friends all contribute to self-esteem in minority children (as they do in all children).
Is self-esteem stable or unstable?

Self-esteem is high in early childhood

Once school starts it drops - *social comparisons*

- But, from 4th grade it starts to rise again:
- Drops again on entering junior high, ...
- ...and high-school.

These effects have important effects:

1. High academic S-E predicts school achievement
2. High social S-E children are better liked by peers.

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What affects self-esteem?

*Culture: Social comparison*

Early maturing girls, late maturing boys have low S-E.

Japanese children score lower on S-E than US children: despite higher academic achievement. Why?

*Child-rearing practices*

Warm and responsive parents lead to high S-E: makes children feel competent and worthwhile.

But, overly tolerant/indulgent parents create false sense of self-esteem.