

TET 103: CHILD DEVELOPMENT (0–3 YEARS)

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Definition of Attachment

- The mother is specially singled out for special attention. The child responds in a special way to her e.g. as she enters the child smiles broadly in a friendly way, when the mother picks him up he pats her face, explores her hair, and snuggles against her body.
- When he feels anxious or afraid he crawls into her lap, and clings closely.

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Lecture 9: Development of Attachment

Lecture objectives

- At the end of this lecture the learner should be able to:
 1. Define attachment as used in child development
 2. Discuss four theories of development child attachment
 3. Explain the four phases of development of child attachment proposed by Schaffer (1996)
 4. Explain the four factors that influence development of child attachment
 5. Explain how the quality of day care affects the development of child attachment.

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Definition of Attachment

- Freud first suggested that the infants emotional tie to the mother provides the foundation for all later relationships i.e. attachment of the infant to the mother is thought to enhance the parent's effectiveness in later socialization of the child.
- The child who has developed an attachment to his parents is more likely to be concerned about maintaining parental affection and approval through adopting socialized behavior than is a child who has failed to develop this special relationship with same adults in his environment.

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Definition of Attachment

- Attachment is a strong affection tie we feel for special people in our lives - leading us to feel pleasure and joy when we use interact with them and to be comforted by their nearness during times of stress
- By the end of the first year, infants have become attached to familiar people who have responded to their needs for physical care and emotional stimulation

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Theories of Attachments

1) Learning Theory (Behaviorism)

- Learning theory stress the importance of feeding for the development of attachment
- As the baby's hunger (Primary drive) is satisfied repeatedly by the mother, her presence, becomes a secondary or learned drive because it is paired with tension relief
- As a result the baby learns to prefer, all kinds of stimuli that accompany feeding, including the mother's soft caresses, harm smiles and tender record of comfort

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Theories of Attachments

2) Reinforcement Principle

- Many studies have challenged the learning theory view that feeding is critical for the development of attachment
- The most famous study is that of Harlow Zimmerman 1959 - a famous study of rhesus monkeys which proved the drive reduction explanation to be wrong. Baby monkeys separated from their mothers at birth and reared by two surrogate mothers one mother made of **stiff wire and has a feeding bottle** attached to it and the other made of **soft terry cloth but lacked a bottle**.

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Theories of Attachments

- A second problem with drive reduction accounts is that it cannot explain why the attachment relationship, once formed, tends to persist over long period in which attachment figures are absent
- Behaviorism would predict that the attachment should extinguish or disappear yet it does not.

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Theories of Attachments

HARLOW & ZIMMERMAN (1959)



- A famous experiment was conducted by Harlow and Zimmerman in 1959, which showed that developing a close bond does not depend on hunger satisfaction.
- They conducted the experiment where rhesus monkey babies were separated from their natural mothers and reared by surrogates- terry cloth covered and other was wire mesh.
- Babies cling to terry cloth mothers even though wire mesh had bottle.
- This shows 'contact comfort' is a more important and need for closeness and affection much deeper.

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Theories of Attachments

3) Psychoanalytic Theory

- According to this view point, parental care-taking activities, such as feeding, that are essential for the survival of the child are critical for the formation of attachment
- Thus according to Freud's classical psychoanalytic theory, babies become attached to their mother on care-givers because the caregivers are associated with gratification of infants innate drive to obtain pleasure through sucking and other forms of oral stimulation.

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Theories of Attachments

- In moments of stress, the baby monkey preferred to cling to the cloth mother even if she dispensed no food. Attachment to this mother did not therefore require the reduction of hunger.
- Studies on human beings reveal the same in that they become attached to other family members who seldom if ever feed them, including fathers, siblings and grandparents, even though they actually spend more time with their mothers and the other

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Theories of Attachments

- The woman, therefore, who breast feed her baby is particularly important to her child's oral gratification
- The child becomes attached first to the mother's breast and ultimately to the mother herself
- Other psychoanalytic theory – Erikson and Mahler emphasize that the central ingredient in attachment is the quality of the mother interaction with her baby. Once the infant develops a sense of trust that the mother will satisfy his needs, he can separate from her for short period to explore the environment.

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Theories of Attachments

- Eventually the child forms a permanent, possible inner image to the mother that can be relied on for emotional support during brief observe.
- The psychoanalytic theory has however been criticized on two grounds:
 - i. Because it builds on Freud's oral stage, it overemphasizes the importance of feeding in attachment bond
 - ii. A greater deal (according to Erickson Mahter) is said about the mother's contribution to the attachment relationship, but much less attention is given to the importance of the infant's characteristics and behavior

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Theories of Attachments

- They also become less upset by separation from parents because they understand that they are necessary only temporary

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Theories of Attachments

4) Cognitive Development Theory

- According to the cognitive developmental view, before specific attachments can occur, the infant not only must be able to differentiate between her mother and a stranger, but must also be aware that people still exist even when she/he cannot see them.
- That is, she must have developed what Piaget terms as **object permanence** or the knowledge that objects, including people have continuous existence apart from her own interaction with them.

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Theories of Attachments

5) Ethological Theory

- Ethology - the science of character formation in human behavior.
- Today, ethological theory of attachment is the most widely accepted view of the infant's emotional ties to the care-giver
- Today, ethological theory of attachment is the most widely accepted view of the infant's emotional ties to the care-giver. This theory was formulated by John Bowlby (1958)

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Theories of Attachments

- Piaget believed that object permanence awareness did not begin to evolve until a child is about 4 months of age.
- Advances in infant's cognitive development can also account, in part for the gradual shift in the ways that attachment is expressed, physical proximity to attachment figures becomes less important as children grow older
- Children are now increasingly able to maintain psychological contact with a parent through words, smiles and looks.

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Theories of Attachments

- In this theory Bowlby was influenced by both evolutionary theory and observational has its roots in a set of instinctual infant responses that are important for the protection and survival of species.
- The infants responses of crying, smiling, sucking, clinging and following (visually at first and later motorically) both elicit the parental care and protection that the baby needs and promote contact between the child and the parents.

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Theories of Attachments

- Just as the infant is biologically prepared to respond to the sights, sounds and nurturance provided by the parents, so the parents are biologically prepared to respond to these developing behaviors on the part of the baby. As a result of these biologically programmed responses both parents and infants develop mutual attachment.
- The value of Bowlby's view lies in its emphasis on the active role of the infants early social signaling systems, such as smiling and crying, in the formation of attachment.

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How Attachment Evolves

a) The Pre-attachment Phase (birth- 6weeks)

- A variety of built-in signals e.g. grasping, smiling, crying and gazing into adults eyes-help to bring newborns babies into close contact with other human beings
- Once an adult responds, infants encourage her to remain nearby, since they are comforted when picked, stroked and talked to softly. Babies of this age can recognize their mother's smell and voice but they are not well attached to her, since they do not mind being left in the care of other adults.

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Theories of Attachments

- Another attractive feature in the theory, stress on the development of mutual attachment, whereby both partners, not just are, became attached
- From this perspective, attachment is a relationship, not simply a behavior of either the infant or the parent
- More controversial is Bowlby's suggestion that these early behaviors are biologically programmed e.g. smiling has a social as well as biological origins.

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How Attachment Evolves

b) The "Attachment-in-the Making" Phase (6 weeks - 12months)

- During this phase the infants start to respond differently to a familiar care-giver than to a stranger e.g. at 4 months a baby may babble and laugh more freely when interacting with his mother and stop crying when picked by her than with a stranger
- As infants engage in face to face interaction with the parent and experience relief from distress, they learn that their own actions affect the behavior of those around them

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How Attachment Evolves

- Attachment does not develop suddenly and unheralded but rather emerges in a series of steps, moving from a baby's general preference for human beings over inanimate objects to a child's real partnership with its parents
- Schaffer (1996) proposed **four** phases in the development of attachment
- These phases are:

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How Attachment Evolves

- They begin to develop a sense of trust – the expectation that the caregiver will respond when signaled
- Babies however still do not protest when separated from the parent, despite the fact that they can recognize and distinguish her from unfamiliar people.

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How Attachment Evolves

3) Clear-cut attachment – 12 months – 24 months

- Now, attachment to the familiar care-giver is evident
- Babies of this phase display separation anxiety in that they become upset when the adult on whom they have come to rely on leaves
- The appearance of separation anxiety suggests that infants have a clear understanding that the caregiver continues to exist even when not in view
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How Attachment Evolves

d) Formation of reciprocal relationship - 24 months and above

- By the end of the 2nd year, rapid growth in representation and language permits toddlers to understand some of the factors that influence the parents coming and going and to predict their return.
- As a result, separation protest declines
- Now the children start to negotiate with the caregiver using request and persuasion to alter her goals rather than crawling after and clinging to her.

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How Attachment Evolves

- Babies who have not yet mastered Piagetian object permanence usually do not become anxious when separated from their mothers (Lester et al 1974)
- Besides protesting their parents departure, older infants and toddlers act more deliberately to maintain her presence e.g. they approach, follow her and climb on her in preference to other
- Babies who have not yet mastered Piagetian object permanence usually do not become anxious when separated from their mothers (Lester et al 1974)

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How Attachment Evolves

- **NB:** According to Bowlby (1980), out of their experience during these four phases, children construct an inner representation of the parent-child bond that becomes a vital part of their personalities. This image serves as a model, or guide for all future interactions through childhood and adolescent into adult life

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How Attachment Evolves

- Besides protesting their parents departure, older infants and toddlers act more deliberately to maintain her presence e.g. they approach, follow her and climb on her in preference to other
- They use her as a secure base from which to explore venture into the environment then return for emotional support.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- The following factors might influence attachment security:
 - 1) **Maternal deprivation**
 - The powerful effect of the baby's affection ties to the mother is most evident when it is absent.
 - Rene Spitz (1945, 1946) observed institutionalized babies who had been given up by their mother between 3rd month and the end of the 1st year. The infants were placed in a large ward where they shared a nurse with at least seven other babies.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- In contrast to the happy, outgoing behavior they had shown before separation, they wept and withdrew from their surroundings, lost weight and had difficulty sleeping if a caregiver whom the baby could get to know did not replace the mother, the depression deepest rapidly
- According to Rene Spitz institutionalized infants, experience emotional difficulties not because they were separated from their mothers but because they were prevented from forming a bond (attachment) with one or a few adults.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- Mothers of securely attached babies have a form of communication called **interactions synchrony**
- **Interactions synchrony** refers to a sensitively tuned, emotional, dance, in which the mother responds to infant signals in a well timed appropriate fashion
- In addition both partners match emotional states, especially the positive ones
- When care-giving is extremely inadequate, it is a powerful predictor of disruptions in attachment
- Child abuse and neglect are associated with attachment insecurity

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- Another study indicated that a first attachment bond can develop as later as 4 - 6 years of age and perhaps even later, but throughout childhood and adolescence, these youngsters were more likely to display emotional and social problems, including an excessive desire for adults attention, "overfriendliness" to strangers, adult and peers and difficulties establishing lasting friendships.
- These findings therefore indicate that fully normal development of attachment depends on establishing close bonds with caregivers during the first few years of life.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- Among maltreated infants, the most worrisome classification disorganized/disoriented attachment is especially high
- Infants of depressed mothers, also show the uncertain pattern of behaviors of mixing closeness, resistance and avoidance, while looking very sad and depressed themselves.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

2) Quality of care-giving

- Even when infants experience the closeness of one or a few care-givers, parental behavior that is insensitive to their signals and need lead to insecure attachment
- Securely attached infants have mothers who respond promptly to infants signals and handle their babies tenderly and carefully
- In contrast, insecurely attached infants have mothers who dislike physical contact, handle them awkwardly and behave in "retentive" manner when meeting the infants needs.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

3) Infant characteristics

- **Interactional synchrony** is a result of a relationship that build between the mother and infant, and infant characteristic should affect how easily it is established
- Infants vary in temperament but the precise role that temperament plays in attachment security is still under debate
- Some researchers think that temperament is responsible the way that babies respond in the strange situation

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

- They believe that babies who are irritable and fearful, may react to brief separations from their mothers with intense anxiety, regardless of the parents sensitivity to the baby
- Many temperamental characteristics however can lead to secure attachment as long as the care-giver sensitively adjust her behavior to fit the needs of her infant
- But when mothers capacity to do so is strained e.g. by lack of help and encouragement from husbands, relatives and friends, then difficult babies are at a greater risk for attachment insecurity.

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Effects of Daycare on Attachment

- a) Group Size - number of children in a single space
 - b) Care-giver-child ratio
 - c) Care-givers' educational preparation
- **NB:** The amount of time children spend in Day-care does affect the nature of child-parent relationship
 - For instance, researchers found that, the more time their children spent in Day-care, the less sensitive mothers were toward their infants at 6 months, 15 months and 3 years of age.
 - The study also found out that children were less affectionate toward their mothers at age 2 and 3 years.

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Factors That Affect Attachment Security

4) Family circumstances

- When families experience major life changes, such as a shift in employment or marital status, the quality of attachment often changes, sometimes in a positive and at other times in a negative direction
- This is because family transitions affect parent-child interaction, which in turn influences the attachment bond.

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Effects of Daycare on Attachment

- Good-day-care providers can sometimes compensate for less than optimal care from parents by giving children an opportunity to form secure attachment to their mothers but a secure attachment to a day-care provider tend to be more socially competent than insecurely attached children who have not formed such a strong compensatory relationship outside the family.
- Stability of staff may be an important determinant of the quality of relationship that emerges between care providers and children in Day-care.
- Studies have indicated that when children were distressed, familiar members of staff were able to

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Effects of Daycare on Attachment

- **DAY-CARE** - can include a variety of arrangements ranging from care in someone else's home or child's own home, to some type of centre-based program
- Today however a good Day-Care is not simply a matter of keeping children safe and adequately fed in their parent's absence
- Day-care should provide the same high-quality educational experiences that an effective preschool does, the only difference being that children attend for an extended day.
- Day care centre and home based care must consider three important factors:

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Effects of Daycare on Attachment

- soothe them more effectively than those whose employment records were unstable. Thus minimizing staff turnover is important to provide a stable, predictable environment for child care.
- It has been found out that the higher the level of teacher training staff members have, the more likely are children to develop secure attachment relationships with their care-givers.

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Self-reflection Questions

1. Define attachment as used in child development
2. Discuss four theories of development child attachment
3. Explain the four phases of development of child attachment proposed by Schaffer (1996)
4. Explain the four factors that influence development of child attachment
5. Explain how the quality of day care affects the development of child attachment.
6. Discuss the effect of working mothers on development of child attachment and general development of the child.

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