

Attachment

☀ Ensuring that infants and toddlers have strong attachments and safe, affectionate, and enduring relationships with family members and teachers is important because:

HANDOUT 24



- Children learn important lessons about themselves and others from their attachment relationship experiences.
- Infants and toddlers who feel securely attached (safe and protected) with their caregivers are able to interact more positively with adults and peers and focus on learning.
- Mobile infants and toddlers feel safe to explore their environment when they feel securely attached to their caregivers.
- Infants and toddlers learn to organize and manage their emotions when adults are consistently responsive to their communication cues and comfort them when they are distressed.
- Infants and toddlers who do not feel safe within warm relationships may begin to perceive adults and peers as threats and the world as a dangerous place.

Remember:

- Infants and toddlers develop secure attachments with special caregivers (family members and teachers) over time because of responsive, affectionate, emotionally available interactions.
- Infants and toddlers can be securely attached to more than one person. Secure attachments to both family members and teachers provide children with emotional support, build children's sense of self-worth, and help them value relationships.
- Families who experience stress need ongoing social support, so that parents can be warm, responsive, and affectionate with their children.
- When caregivers are inconsistent in their responses, infants and toddlers may become more dependent on their caregivers in order to be protected. Alternately, when caregivers are frequently angry with children, children may learn to avoid adults, but may become angry with adults and peers because their emotional needs are not met.
- Secure attachments become insecure attachments when caregivers become less responsive. Insecure attachments can become secure when caregivers become more responsive and affectionate.

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