Socioemotional Development in Infancy

PSY 356
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Attachment

• First social relationship; Strong emotional bond between infant and caregiver
• Purpose
  – survival
  – emotional survival
  – cognitive stimulation
  – social: Synchronized routines

Ethologists

• Study biological basis of behavior (evolutionary context)
• Conrad Lorenz: imprinting

• Klara and Kennell: bonding
Harlow studies
• Effects of isolation
• Contact comfort
• Critical period

Normal Play Behaviors

Effects of Isolation
Bowlby

- Studied institutionalized children
- Attachment Formation
  - 1) Preattachment (0-3 months)
  - 2) Attachment in the Making (3-6 months)
  - 3) Clear-cut Attachment (6-12 months)
    - stranger anxiety
    - separation anxiety
  - 4) Multiple attachments

Measuring Attachment

- Mary Ainsworth
- Strange Situation
- 3 Categories
  - securely attached
  - insecure avoidant
  - insecure ambivalent
- Recent 4th category: disorganized

Separation Episode
TEMPERAMENT

• Behavioral style or primary pattern of reacting to environment
• Thomas and Chess (1956)
• Nine temperament dimensions
• Three significant constellations

Classifying Infant Temperaments

• **Easy Child** (40% of sample) - smiles easily, adapts to change, quickly develops regular patterns of eating and sleeping
• **Difficult Child** (10%) - easily frustrated, slow to adapt, withdraws from novelty, shows irregular patterns
• **Slow-To-Warm-Up Child** (15%) - mildly negative initial responses gradually change to positive, reactions less intense than Difficult Child
• Remaining 35% in sample didn’t fall into categories

Goodness of Fit

• Outcome determined largely by **goodness of fit** between temperament and environment
• Consistent individual differences in temperament evident from earliest months
• Children react differently to environments depending on own temperaments
• Recognizing different temperaments and providing a good fit is important for all who interact with children
Emergence of Emotions

• In first weeks, smiles associated with pleasurable physical sensations
• Social smile at 6 weeks
• Laughter around 14 weeks
• Stranger anxiety appears around seven months
• Self-conscious emotions (complex) emerge after the first year