Attachment

• First social relationship; Strong emotional bond between infant and caregiver

• Purpose
  – survival
  – emotional survival
  – cognitive stimulation
  – social: Synchronized routines

Studies Show:

• Children with close bonds to at least one adult are much better able to comfort themselves when receiving inoculations.
• Children who are picked up when crying during the first six months of life cry less frequently during the second six months.
• Primates who receive good maternal care show fewer indications of physiological stress.

Ethologists

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

• Klaus and Kennell: bonding
Harlow’s Study of Attachment

- Infant rhesus monkeys were placed with two surrogate mothers, one made of wire and one covered with soft cloth
- Milk-producing nipple was attached to either the wire or the cloth mother

![Graph showing contact time with wire and cloth surrogate mothers]

Harlow studies

- Effects of Isolation
- Attachment was based on “contact comfort” rather than feeding
- Critical period
Normal Play Behaviors

Effects of Isolation

Bowlby

- Studied institutionalized children
Bowlby

- 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

  Mother-child dyads were observed in a playroom under four conditions:
  - initial mother-child interaction
  - mother leaves infant alone in playroom
  - friendly stranger enters playroom
  - mother returns and greets child

Forms of Attachment

- Securely attached - explores the room when mother is present, becomes upset and explores less when mother is not present, shows pleasure when mother returns
- Avoidantly attached - a form of insecure attachment in which child avoids mother and act coldly to her
Forms of Attachment

• Anxious resistant (ambivalent) attachment - a form of insecure attachment where the child remains close to mother and remains distressed despite her attempts to comfort
• Recent 4th category: disorganized

Insecure Attachment

![Image of a child in a high chair]

What evidence suggests that responsiveness to infants’ needs and desires does not spoil them?

• E.g., can you over respond to an infant’s cries? (3 months old?)
• Ainsworth & Bowlby hypothesized that providing regular contact comfort, responding promptly and sensitively to crying promotes secure attachment.
• Observation of mothers of infants who are securely attached shows they are more attentive and comforting than are mothers of infants who are insecurely attached (Ainsworth, 1979)
You can’t spoil an infant!

- Van den Boom (1994) trained 50 mothers who had 3-month-old infants with highly irritable temperaments to perceive, interpret and respond appropriately to babies’ signals, especially distress.
- When the infants were 12 mos., more of them showed secure attachment (62%).
- than a control group of irritable babies whose mothers had not received such responsiveness training (22%).