



## BUILDING A SECURE ATTACHMENT FOR YOUR BABY

Attachments are unique and lasting emotional ties between infants and their parents. There are two basic patterns of attachment: “secure” and “insecure.” A secure attachment is characterized by a child’s ability to use a parent as a source of comfort and a “secure base” from which to explore his/her surroundings. It is only when children feel confident in their parents’ availability that they can fully explore and play on their own. Sensitive, responsive parenting promotes secure attachments. When children form secure attachments with their parents, they feel comfortable exploring their surroundings in their parent’s presence, they seek their parent’s help and reassurance when they feel distressed (and not a stranger’s), and they are more willing to comply to requests without exhibiting any attempts to manipulate the behavior of caregivers. Children who have secure attachments with their parents are more likely to develop independence and self-confidence as they grow. They are also more likely to hold appropriate interactions with peers and teachers, to manage their emotions, to be focused, curious, and motivated in school, and to have strong problem-solving skills.

An insecure attachment is characterized by children’s inability to use their parents for comfort or as a “secure base.” Insensitive, rejecting, or inconsistent parenting has been linked to insecure attachments. There are three basic types of insecure attachments. When children are overly dependent on a parent and experience considerable separation anxiety, they exhibit what is called insecure-resistant attachment. When children are under-dependent, seemingly disengaged from the parent and barely notice them upon separation, they exhibit what is called insecure-avoidant

attachment; such “independence” in an infant or toddler, although sometimes praised, is usually develop mentally inappropriate. Finally, when children seem frightened or disoriented in the presence of their parents, they exhibit what is called disorganized/disoriented attachment. If children form insecure attachments with their parents or caregivers, they may exhibit excessive dependence, marked shyness, withdrawal, unfriendliness, bossiness, failure to seek contact or comfort when needed, over-concern with the parent’s well-being (i.e., role reversal), fear or disorientation in the parent’s presence (e.g. approaching the parent while looking away), promiscuous or sexualized behavior.

Children who have insecure attachments with their parents are more likely to have poor social skills (e.g., withdrawal or aggression), to act out and be disobedient, to have poor communication skills, to be impulsive and easily distracted, and to lack curiosity and motivation in school. It is important to note that an insecure attachment does not fate a child to failure, change certainly can occur. The longer a child is on a specific path, however, the harder it is to alter the course.

Guidelines for Supporting Healthy Relationships between Young Children and Their Parents. Two of our principal responsibilities as a parent are to comfort our children and to facilitate their exploration of the world. Knowing how to tailor our responsibilities to a situation according to the needs of our children is central to supportive parenting. Also, having verbal and written information about developmental milestones and typical child development can help us be more in tune with our children. It’s also important

himaya, in collaboration with **Moms & To Be**, aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.

to reflect on our own parenting strengths and challenges. Some parents have more difficulty responding to children while others have more difficulty letting go. All parents carry memories of their own relationships (with parents, caregivers, loved ones) that “filter” their interpretation of their child’s actions. Use the parent-child relationship as an “engine of change.” Many behavior problems are rooted in miscommunication between parents and children. Changing your perception of your children’s behavior could help improve your relationship with them. Try to see their acting out as a cry for attention, or as a need for parental limit-setting, and engage with them. It may: (a) help you understand how important you are to your children and the central role you play in their lives, (b) increase your ability to empathize with your children, and (c) give way for specific, perhaps new, parenting strategies such as daily “special playtimes” when you have alone-time with your children.

In short, a good child-parent relationship promotes the well-being and healthy development of children. The strategies outlined above may work better for some families than others. Certainly, parenting does not occur in a vacuum. Many factors can promote or impede supportive parenting, such as financial stability, mental health, marital quality, social support, and neighborhood safety and cohesion. Promoting healthy child-parent relationships cannot be viewed as a cure-all, but, rather, as one component of good practice. himaya offers exclusive workshops for parents who want to learn techniques for effective communication, critical listening, and conflict resolution. When parents use the skills learned during the Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T), they are amazed with the dramatic improvement they have on their relationships at home and beyond. To find out more, or to book a session, contact himaya at 71702316/cbrd@himaya.org.

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