



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.

ATTACHMENT THEORY

The desire to one day become a parent is one shared by most of humanity. With this desire comes the desire to raise healthy, happy children and see them develop into dynamic and resilient adults. Engaging in this path comes with its great share of rewards but also frustration, anxiety, fear and sometimes shame and guilt. Parents carry the weight and responsibility of the next generation's mental and physical health on their shoulders. Investing in their child's wellbeing can only come at the cost of other interests and activities. Attachment is the bond that links a child with his primary caretaker. To develop, the primary caretaker must be present and disposed to answer the child's needs. Without such a bond, a child will be much more at risk for maladjustment in later life. Maladjustment can be understood as having difficulties in coping with the demands of private, social and work life.

Attachment theory originates from the work of John Bowlby who was looking for a way to explain the correlation between infant separation with the mother and maladjustment later in life. Attachment behavior in the child is characterized by seeking proximity and protection from the attachment figure when feeling threatened or upset. Attachment behavior in parents can be described as responding in an appropriate manner to a child's needs. This does not negate the fact that parents caring for children will still have a desire to be supported and cared for.

Bowlby observed that infants would feel distraught when separated from their mother even if they were being cared for by someone else. Attachment can be understood as a strong bond between a child and his attachment figure that transcends the satisfaction of biological needs but that is still anchored on the stable and regular satisfaction of these needs, and the feeling of safety and security that comes with it.

Research suggests that the younger the child, the more critical it is for him to develop attachment. If an infant does not manage to develop a strong bond with a caregiver, irreversible developmental consequences such as increased aggression and reduced intelligence will ensue. In that sense, attachment can be seen as a basic and fundamental need for infants.

Bowlby believed that parenting behavior in humans is not the product of some unvarying parenting instinct, nor can it be reduced simply to the product of learning. Parenting behavior, for Bowlby, has biological roots, which explains the very strong emotions associated with it; but the behavior of parents can be better explained by their own life experiences during childhood and the rest of their lives. Mary Ainsworth and others continued Bowlby's

research and described four different attachment patterns.

- Secure attachment is seen when the child is confident that the parent will be able to meet his needs. This confidence is necessarily based on the child's previous experiences interacting with his parents. Secure children are easily comforted by the presence of the latter, which allows them to go off and explore their environment confidently.

