Describe and Evaluate Bowlby's and Ainsworth's ideas about parent-child relationships.

Attachments represent an important feature of an infant's early experience; there are many reasons why they can be considered to be of vital importance in the development of infants. Three major reasons why development of successful attachments during infancy can be argued to be of paramount importance are: This
The quality of early relationships enhance an individual's likelihood to enter into successful relationships in later life. Early relationships can be seen as a prototype for all relationships to follow.

- An infant's learning experience is enhanced through interaction with adults and

- The primary attachment figure can form a secure base for exploration of novel stimuli leading to the enhancement of the child's development.

Bowlby and Ainsworth are two of the most important figures in the field of the development of attachments. Ainsworth et al developed 'The Strange Situation' which is the most widely used, standardised procedure for studying attachment. Bowlby's attachment theory and maternal deprivation hypothesis have had an enormous impact on social work policy and offer a comprehensive theory about infant attachment, although Bowlby's work has been highly criticised, by some, in the years since its publication.
Starting at about six weeks, infants show a general tendency to want to be close to people, and show a clear preference for people over inanimate objects. At first, babies show no preference towards particular people (just a preference for people in general as opposed to other stimuli). After the age of about three months, infants begin to distinguish different people and show preferential behaviours such as smiling and looking when in the company of familiar people, the infant shows no distress when in the presence of strangers at this stage: for this reason, it is referred to as the *indiscriminate attachment stage*. At the age of about seven or eight months, infants begin to actively seek the attention of certain individuals and express distress when separated from these primary attachment figures, the baby will also avoid being in close proximity with unfamiliar people and show the fear response to contact from strangers. This is referred to as the stage of *specific attachment* because the infant also shows a preference towards the primary caregiver (usually the mother) and begins to use her as a secure base for exploration of a strange environment.
In infancy and early childhood, attachment is shown in four kinds of behaviour; seeking proximity, distress on separation, relief on reunion and being generally oriented towards the person - by listening to their voice or showing them toys etc even if they are not in close proximity. Bearing these attachment behaviours in mind, Ainsworth et al (1971) devised the 'strange situation' as a means of studying attachments methodically and objectively. The strange situation allows for the collection of multiple measures in the course of a standardised sequence of events. There are eight distinct episodes in the experiment in which the mother and a stranger come and go from the room; each episode lasts for about three minutes (although this period is shortened / lengthened if the infant displays undue distress). The infant's response to the different episodes is systematically recorded allowing categorisation of infants into one of three categories devised by Ainsworth: Type A

(anxious avoidant), Type B (securely attached) or Type C (anxious ambivalent). The eight episodes involved in the 'strange situation' are listed and explained in the table below:

Number of Episode	**Persons Present**	**Duration**	**Brief Description**
	Mother and Baby	30 seconds	Observer introduces the mother and baby to the experimental room and then leaves.
2	Mother and Baby	3 minutes	Mother is non-participant while baby explores: if necessary, play is stimulated after 2 minutes
3	Stranger, Mother and Baby	3 minutes	Stranger enters. Minute 1: stranger is silent Minute 2: stranger converses with mother Minute 3: Stranger approaches baby After 3 minutes, mother leaves unobtrusively.
4	Stranger and Baby	3 minutes or less	First separation episode. Stranger's behaviour is geared to that of baby.
5	Mother and Baby	3 minutes or more	First reunion episode. Mother greets and comforts baby then tries to settle him again in play. Mother then leaves saying 'bye bye'
6	Baby alone	3 minutes or less	Second separation episode
7	Stranger and Baby	3 minutes ore less	Continuation of second separation . Stranger enters and gears her behaviour to that of baby.
8	Mother and	3 minutes	Second reunion episode.

	Baby jB4A from jB4A coursewrok jB4A work jB4A info jB4A		Mother enters, greets baby, then picks him up. Meanwhile stranger leaves unobtrusively. cogc gcr segcgcw orgc gck ingc fogc gc!

The 'strange situation' is a controlled observation in which one or more trained observers record the child's attachment behaviour in the mother's presence, when she leaves, when she returns, how the child responds to the stranger and how the child's play is affected throughout.
Ainsworth et al saw the mother's sensitivity as the salient feature of her behaviour towards her child likely to result in different attachment styles. Sensitive mothers are empathetic to their baby's viewpoint and are able to interpret their child's signals and respond to its needs. Based on the strange situation, Ainsworth et al have concluded that:

· Sensitive mothers have secure babies who can explore strange environments, using the mother as a safe base and who can also tolerate brief, occasional separations from her

· Babies of insensitive mothers are so insecure that either they become very angry when she leaves or they seem almost indifferent to her presence or absence and do not view her as a safe base.

Based on their reactions to the different situations during the experiment, infants can be classed as one of three Types according to criteria developed by Ainsworth et al. Type A or anxious avoidant infants largely ignore their mother; because of their indifference towards her, play is little affected by whether or not she is present. The baby shows either very few or no signs of distress when the mother leaves and actively ignores or avoids her on her return. Simply being alone rather than being left by the mother causes distress and the baby is comforted as easily by the stranger as by the mother. Type B or securely attached infants play happily while the mother is present, whether or not the stranger is present. The mother is largely ignored because she can be trusted to be there if she is needed; when she leaves the infant becomes distressed and play is reduced. The baby seeks immediate contact with the mother on her return and is quickly calmed down through contact with the mother and resumes play. The distress is caused by the mother's absence, not by being alone and although she can provide some comfort, the stranger cannot console the baby as effectively as the mother showing that the baby treats the mother and the stranger very differently. Type C or anxious resistant infants are fussy and wary while the mother is present. These infants cry more and explore less than Types A and B and do not use the mother as a secure base. Although the baby is very distressed by the mother's departure, he shows ambivalence towards her on her return, both seeking contact and displaying anger and resistance. The baby doesn't return readily to play and resists the stranger's efforts to make contact.
In samples of infants born to middle-class families in the United States, about 70% of infants were classified as securely attached and about 15% fell into each of the other two categories. In evaluating the strange situation, the stability of these classifications over time is important. Waters (1978) showed a perfect agreement in the classification of infants tested at the age of 12 months and again at 18 months. However, Ainsworth found less consistency over time but argued that this was not necessarily due to inherent problems with the experiment but could be due to qualitative changes in the infants' attachments over time: given stable home

circumstances, the 'strange situation' measures did appear to show good test-retest stability over time.

Lamb et al considered Ainsworth's 'strange situation' to be *'… the most powerful and useful procedure ever available for the study of socioemotional development in infancy.'* Ainsworth's A, B and C Type classifications are widely regarded as reliable and stable and have consequently been used in a wide variety of studies about attachment in the years proceeding Ainsworth's original development of the 'strange situation'.

There are some criticisms of the 'strange situation' largely concerning its low ecological validity: Lamb suggests that the main problems with the experiment are that it is extremely artificial and fails to take the mother's behaviour into account. Main et al (1985) suggested a fourth classification (Type D - insecure/disorganised infants) after finding that 13% of infants tested did not conform to either the A, B or C classifications set out by Ainsworth. Main's Type D infants displayed a diverse array of disorganised and disordered behaviour and failed to display a clear-cut strategy for dealing with stressful situations. Cross-cultural studies are helpful in determining universal traits and can also point to any culture specific aspects of testing situations thus providing useful evaluative material. 32 worldwide studies using the 'strange situation' with over 2000 infants carried out by Van Ijzendoom & Kroonenberg (1985) came up with three major conclusions: firstly there are marked intra-cultural differences in distribution of the attachment Types A, B and C. Secondly, the overall distribution of attachment types was very close to Ainsworth's standard (Type B 70%, Types A and B approximately 15% each), but even within the US there was a high variability between samples. Van Ijzendoom & Kroonenberg found a strong pattern of cross-cultural differences whereby Type B infants are universally the most common whereas Type A babies are more common than Type A in Western Europe and Type C are more common than Type A in Israel and Japan, indicating that cultural differences affect the way in which the 'strange situation' is interpreted by children, for instance, Japanese babies who are rarely separated from their mothers find her departure during the experiment more upsetting than majority of children from most of other cultures.

It is also worth mentioning ethical implications whilst evaluating Ainsworth's experiment as it is designed to see how infants react to stress in the form of an unfamiliar physical environment, separation from their mother and contact with a stranger; however the experiment is adapted to the needs of each infant with certain stages being lengthened or shortened in order to avoid undue stress on the part of the infant.

Whereas Ainsworth's work was mainly geared towards creating a methodical way of categorising attachment types, Bowlby's approach was a lot more theoretical. Bowlby's attachment theory was highly influenced by ethological theory (especially Lorenz's theory of *imprinting*); in particular he emphasised the instinctive nature of attachment, including his theory of *monotropy*, and the existence of a *critical period* for attachment formation. Schaffer (1989) views Bowlby's theory as *'…the most comprehensive theoretical account of attachment formation.'* It has become the most widely used conceptual framework within which research on attachment has been conducted in recent years.

Bowlby views attachment behaviour as instinctive. Babies are born with a tendency to display proximity-ensuring behaviours such as smiling and crying, which are displayed towards the mother figure. Bowlby hypothesised that infants and mothers have evolved a biological need to stay in constant contact with each other and that attachment is an important survival mechanism protecting against predators by reducing the amount of time the infant spends separated from the mother. Bowlby

claimed that the infant displays a strong innate tendency to become attached to one particular individual, he termed this *monotropy* and asserted that it is normally, though not exclusively, an instinct geared towards the mother. This attachment is qualitatively different from any subsequent attachments; Bowlby argues that the attachment to the mother is of a different order altogether from other relationships.
Schaffer and Emerson (1964) carried out a study which produced results which directly conflict with Bowlby's theory of Monotropy. During four-weekly visits to family homes during a baby's first year with a follow up visit at 18 months, attachment was measured by the amount of protest the baby showed when separated from a familiar person. At about seven months, 29% had already formed several attachments simultaneously, by ten months 59% had developed more than one attachment and by 18 months, 87% had formed multiple attachments. Although there was usually only one particularly strong attachment, only half of the 18-month-olds were principally attached to the mother. From Schaffer and Emerson's study it can be concluded that infants form a hierarchy of attachments and that multiple attachments are the exception rather than the rule and the mother is not always or necessarily the main attachment figure.
The concept that there is a *critical period* for the formation of primary attachments is a view that was proposed by Bowlby, who suggested that children must form attachments before the age of two or else they would never recover. Rutter (1981) however, believes that although there is a *sensitive period* during which children are more likely to form primary attachments, recovery of maternal deprivation is possible over time. The onset of the sensitive period is determined by perceptual factors: the infant directs attachment behaviour directly once he has the ability to discriminate between people. The sensitive period is gradually brought to an end as the infant becomes increasingly wary of strangers.
The combined ideas of monotropy and the critical period led Bowlby to the formation of the *Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis*. Bowlby believed that the attachment to the mother could not be broken in the first few years of life without serious and permanent damage to social, emotional and intellectual development. Also, if an attachment that had already been formed was disrupted through separation from the mother figure there would be severe emotional effects on the infant for the duration of the separation, with a risk of permanent damage depending on the length of the separation. One problem with assessing Bowlby's ideas about deprivation is that human deprivation can only be studied where it occurs naturally and deprivation is unlikely to be an isolated event so the separation from the mother will be the result of other factors, therefore the precise cause of an infant's behaviour cannot be directly determined.
The short term affects of deprivation, occurring either immediately or over a short period of time after separation from the mother, follow a typical sequence. First the infant shows protest in the form of acute distress, then despair is displayed as general misery and apathy and finally detachment when the infant is no longer concerned by the parent's absence. Research by Rutter has shown that there are a number of factors which effect the intensity of the separation anxiety expressed by infants. Firstly, distress on separation is greater in a strange environment (for instance admission to hospital) than in a familiar one, secondly a link with previous family life - either the presence of someone in the family or the continuity of the structure of family life with new people may reduce a child's feelings of isolation - children accompanied by a sibling to a residential nursery showed significantly less distress than children attending alone (Heinicke & Westheimer, 1967).
Long-term effects of maternal deprivation, which may occur several years after separation, include metal retardation and defects of personality or behaviour. Evidence for this conclusion comes mainly from studies of institutionalised children

who Tizard showed to display retardation in language and cognition. However, there is evidence that when institutional care involves a good quality of stimulation, no intellectual impairment is found. Children with a large number of siblings have been shown to display poorer intellectual development than their contemporaries implying that parental attention and interaction is important in intellectual development which may be the element missing in institutions where there may be a large child to adult ratio. Alternatively it is possible that that lack of social stimulation could have an indirect influence on intellectual development for instance, depression resulting from emotional deprivation could lead to poor intellectual progress.

Evidence provided by Rutter suggests that infants institutionalised early are more likely to show subsequent personality problems that those institutionalised late and implying that that long-term problems are the result of failure to form an attachment rather than being due to subsequent attachment disruption. There appear to be long-term effects of early life experiences but problems appear to arise primarily as a result of a loss rather than a lack of normal family experience. Bowlby's emphasis of the mother's role in deprivation is perhaps a little extreme; problems of deprivation could be viewed as a result of social deprivation as a whole rather than as a direct result of separation from the mother.

Bowlby's work shows the importance of the formation of secure attachments during the early stages of infancy whilst Ainsworth's 'strange situation' allows an objective measure to be made of attachment types. This enables us to attempt to determine the factors which contribute to successful attachment formation, which can be argued to be paramount with regards to intellectual, social and emotional success later in life. Both Ainsworth and Bowlby have their critics but are widely regarded to be the leading names in their field; the sheer number of replications of Ainsworth's experiment speaks volumes about the confidence that other psychologists have in her procedures whilst Bowlby's theory of attachment could be argued to be in need of revision, but on the other hand, Bowlby's work, commissioned by the World Health Organisation, had an enormous impact in the history of social reform. Bowlby's work has had an enormous impact on social work policy, legislation relating to children, psychology and psychiatry.