

**Attachment** is the close emotional relationship between two people, which involves a feeling of well-being and a desire to be close. Although attachments occur throughout your life, the attachment made between an infant and caregiver is particularly important. Development of attachments

Infants have an innate ability to seek interactions with other individuals. This is known as **sociability** and is integral to the phases in the development of attachment (**Scaffer, 1996**).

**The table below summarises the four stages of this process:**

Phase of attachment:	Age range:	Characteristics of phase:
Pre-attachment phase	0-3 months	At about 6 weeks, infants begin to treat other humans differently from objects by smiling and gurgle at them.
Indiscriminate attachment phase	3-7 months	Infant can distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar people but is quite happy to be comforted by anyone.
Discriminate attachment phase	7-9 months	Infant distinguishes between carers and strangers and exhibits distress or <b>separation anxiety</b> when left alone (they have developed <b>object permanence</b> ) and may be fearful of the strangers.
Multiple attachment phase	9+ months	Attachments develop with other people (for example, grandparents or brothers and sisters), although the original attachment remains the strongest.

## Cross-cultural variations in attachment

Different cultures have different social norms and accepted ways of doing things. Cross-culturing variations occur in many aspects of behaviour including child rearing. This difference may result in differences in attachments.

Infants raised in Japanese homes and in Israeli kibbutzim show high levels of insecure-resistant attachment. These being close environments with the primary caregiver always present and few strangers around could explain this.

German infants appear to be particularly insecure-avoidant in their attachments, although their parents were attentive to their children and sensitive to their needs. However, the parents considered some of the **'secure'** behaviour to be too **'clingy'** and discouraged it.

These findings suggest that the American criteria used in the **'Strange Situation'** are not appropriate for other cultures: It would be wrong to suggest that the cultures with high levels of insecure attachments were raising children wrongly.

## Effects of deprivation and privation

Attachments can be damaged if the relationship between the caregiver and infant is broken.

## The effects of separation

Separation could be considered the same as short-term deprivation. Robertson and Bowlby (1952) investigated its effects on young children separated from their mothers. They found that the distress felt by the children fell into three categories called the **protest-despair-detachment (PDD)** model.

## **Short-term effects of deprivation are highlighted above but what are the long - term consequences of a lost attachment?**

Again, Bowlby has been very influential in this area. His maternal deprivation hypothesis states that long-term intellectual, social and emotional damage follows the deprivation of an attachment during a critical period in the child's development.

## **The effects of privation**

Research into privation tends to involve carefully studying individuals who have experienced a privated infancy. These include case studies of tragically neglected children and longitudinal studies of institutionalised children, such as orphans.

### **Aim...**

To investigate the long-term effects of early institutional care.

### **Method...**

Longitudinal study and natural experiment. Children aged younger than 4 months at start. Received good physical care but formation of attachments was discouraged.

### **Results...**

Aged 16, relationships between adopted children and parents did not differ much from a control group of non-adopted families but were considerably better bonded than restored children and parents. Unlike non-adopted children, adopted and restored children had similar problems in forming relationships outside the family.

### **Conclusions...**

- Adopted children form better relationships with their families than restored children (possibly owing to the greater desire of the adopting parents to make those relationships work).
- Adopted and restored children experience problems forming relationships outside the home (possibly owing to low self-esteem or poor emotional development caused by early experiences).

### **Evaluation...**

The evidence suggests that early childhood experiences (including privation) can be overcome later in life, provided the conditions are right. This contradicts Bowlby's view of a critical period during which time children develop attachments that provide a model for future relationships and ensure healthy emotional and social development.

## **Effects of day care**

As more and more mothers are entering or returning to the workforce, the demand for good quality crèches, nurseries and childminders is growing rapidly.

## **Day care and cognitive development**

**reasoning and linguistic skills.**

It seems that day care can have a positive influence on the child's cognitive development provided it is good quality and provides intellectual stimulation.

## **Day care and social development**

**Social development** refers to the growth of the child's ability to form relationships with others and to acquire a level of independence.

On balance, the effect of day care on social development is seen to be positive. Children gain greater independence and become more competent at dealing with social interactions. However, this is only the case if the day care is of high quality, providing children with stimulating and well-organised experience.