



Nurturing and Attachment

Name: _____

Class Period: _____

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Affirmation and affection are the key ingredients needed for an infant to attach to his/her parents. When parents and child have warm feelings toward each other children develop an important trust that their most basic needs will be met, along with a sense of love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.

The theory of the attachment-exploration balance describes the need for the child to be able to explore while in close proximity to the mother. Long-term effects of attachment studies report that insecure attachment by age one can still be observed at age 15. The longevity of secure attachment is proof that it is an issue that must be addressed by a parent. The mother-infant dyad suggests that a balance must occur within the relationship. The mother must respond to the infant's needs in a timely and sensitive matter, but not with an over involved frequency.

In the long-term studies of secure attachment, infants who experienced more than 20 hours of non-maternal care per week were more likely to have insecure attachment. A variety of explanations were made as to why this may be so. Explanations include the quality of child care, the level of sensitivity a mother expresses to her child's needs when she is home, and other stressors.

Research shows that when parents notice and affirm ordinary behavior as well as accomplishments; express warmth through touch, voice and non-verbal endearments (smiling, expressions, etc.); and acknowledge and attend to the full range of children's feelings the benefits are as follows:

- the best chance of healthy development
- better academic grades
- healthier behaviors
- more positive peer interactions
- an increased ability to cope with stress

Additional Resources:

~ Nurturing Natures: Attachment and Children's Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development

By: Graham Music

~ Nurturing Touch Principles: <http://www.attachmentparenting.org/principles/touch.php>