

Social-Emotional Development: Attachment and Emotion

Erin Martin, PhD

Psychology

Genetic and Environmental Factors

Santrock (2009) discussed how there is a link in some studies concerning the adult attachment style reflecting the attachment patterns during childhood; while other studies do not show this close correlation, events during development may alter the attachment style in adulthood. If attachment style and patterns can change, then there is some credence to environmental influences on attachment. Once again there may be a natural tendency for a person to have a certain type of attachment, yet environmental influences may shift those tendencies slightly. I believe that nature and nurture work together to create a person's attachment style. The reason why one of the studies that Santrock discussed found attachment style remains throughout development may be due to attachment style being based on a person's temperament. If the person's natural temperament is that of negative affectivity, then they are easily distressed and may have more attachment related anxiety.

The interaction of the parents with the child is linked to the attachment of the child to the parent; if the caregiver (parent) is responsive to the child and there is reciprocal attention between child and parent, there is a more secure attachment style (Trotter & Swartwood, 2007). If the child's affectionate needs are not met, they may develop more insecure attachment styles. Parenting style may have a link to the type of attachment style the child develops; the responsiveness of the parent to the child depends on the parenting style.

Cognitive and Social Development

Some studies have indicated that children with secure attachment tend to be more socially and emotionally balanced; while children with more insecure attachment may show more social and behavioral difficulties (Trotter & Swartwood, 2007). As previously discussed, parenting style may have a link to attachment style; it is also linked to social competence of the child. Authoritative parenting styles tend to be linked to children with more social competency (Trotter & Swartwood, 2007).

Children with a secure attachment feel free to explore their environment and are confident that on the return to their parent they will be emotionally secure (Santrock, 2009; Trotter & Swartwood, 2007). These children feel free to focus their cognitive, emotional, and physical energy on learning and exploring their environment; they are not preoccupied with the insecurity of their attachment. Studies have indicated that children with authoritative parenting styles have better school achievement (Casanova, Garcia-Linares, de la Torre, & de la Villa 2005; Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, & Steinberg, 1997; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992).

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