

Teaching and Learning

Attachment



What do we mean when we refer to 'attachment' in the early years?

We are referring to the relationship bond between the child and their primary care giver. This connection is formed in the child's earliest years and will impact on the child's sense of self, their development, and the connections they form with others.

Why is it important that we understand what is meant by 'attachment' in the early years?

Through a sound understanding of the stages and impact of attachment, practitioners will be better equipped to support the child to develop the sense of security, confidence and motivation to explore and learn in a safe environment that nurtures their wellbeing.

Watch the following video for an overview of attachment in the early years. Discuss with your team or a partner, what you thought of the content.

[Anna Freud - Attachment video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdtme4nO56A) or type in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdtme4nO56A> to your browser

Task

It is worth acknowledging that all practitioners will have a different level of understanding of the theory of attachment – to enable you to baseline understanding and to promote professional development, task all practitioners with the following research task. Encourage individuals to share their findings at your next staff team meeting. Reflect on what the findings are.

Research Task

Task some practitioners to read into Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- What are the 4 characteristics of attachment he identifies?
- What are the 4 attachment styles he refers to?
- How does Bowlby's theory of attachment influence practice in the early years today?

Are practitioners able to find the links between the theory they research to their practice? What examples can they share?

There are many more theorists that have shared their ideas about the stages and impact of attachment in early years – the more we learn from their research, the better we will understand the children in our care and how best we can support them.