

# Healthy Living

## Under 2's: Building relationships - Attachments



Attachment in early years is crucial to helping to develop close and meaningful relationships with primary caregivers. Positive attachments can have a huge bearing on the emotional development of children from as young as babies.

Attachment: “A lasting psychological connectedness between human beings” (Bowlby, 1997)<sup>1</sup>

For more general information in this area, please refer to the ‘Key person – attachment’ Q card below:

<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/media/2297/key-person-attachment-print.pdf>

### TASK 1

What does a secure attachment in a baby look like in your setting?

Children may show-

- Proximity maintenance- wanting to be near the key person.
- Safe haven-returning to the key person for comfort or safety if they feel afraid or threatened.
- Secure base-treating their key person as a base of security from which they can explore their surroundings. They can return to the base when needed.
- Separation distress-experience anxiety in the absence of the key person. They are upset when their key person leaves, but happy to see them on their return.

Think of a key child in your setting? Do you observe any of these behaviours? What do they look like with a child under 2? Discuss with your peers and share some anecdotal stories about a child. If you shared an observation with a lack of attachment, what might you do in practice to support?

## **TASK 2**

Create a spider diagram of all the things (small and big) that you do with the under 2's in your setting to make them feel secure. How do you go the extra mile? What are your areas for development?

Here are some headings to get you started:

- Key person
- Parental relationships
- Understanding the unique child
- Routine
- Environment
- Settling in/ Transition
- Can they bring a comforter from home?
- Can you give a child a cuddle when they are upset?

## TASK 3

0-2 really is a critical time to build relationships by being present, attuned, responsive and sensitive to their unique needs. Having a deeper connection with young children is so important and can make them feel safe and secure on a much higher level.

Reflect on the following questions from the perspective of a child:

- How do you know what I really need?
- How do we connect on an emotional level?
- Do you emotionally understand me?
- How do I communicate with you? Touch, expression, and tone of voice.
- What are my signals and cues to tell you what I want?
- What calms and soothes my emotions?
- How do you emotionally connect with me?
- What happens if the adult is stressed or emotionally insecure - can I get help?

## TASK 4

Emotional Scaffolding is a term you may be familiar with. It is supporting children's development and learning by offering the right help, at the right time, in the right way.

If this is a new term to you, explore the link below for more information.

[EEF blog: Scaffolding – more than just a worksheet | EEF  
\(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.eef.org.uk/blog/scaffolding-more-than-just-a-worksheet)

## TASK 5

Ever thought of doing baby massage in your setting?

Baby massage is a great way to strengthen the bond and attachment support between practitioner and baby through interaction. In turn it can help support babies' communication and social skills and help to make them feel securely attached, loved, and respected.

Have a look at the following links to see if this is something you can implement. Perhaps you could get parents on board as well. Be sure to consult with parents before implementation.

- [baby massage introduction uk - Google Search](#)
- [baby massage in a nursery introduction uk - Google Search](#)