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Social and Personality Development in Infancy
Theories

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

- **Freud**
  - Oral Stage – derive satisfaction from the mouth
  - Symbiotic relationship between mother and child
  - Fixation could later result in swearing, nail biting
- **Erikson**
  - Trust versus Mistrust
    - Helping the infant get its needs met consistently
    - Social relationships go beyond feeding
The ability to make strong emotional bonds is innate

These bonds have survival value

Bonds are maintained by instinctive behaviors that create and sustain proximity
Theories
Ethological Perspectives: John Bowlby

• Attachment
  – *An attachment* is an emotional bond in which a person’s sense of security is bound up in the relationship
    • The child can use the “mother” as a “safe base”
  – Ethologists believe the first 2 years constitute a sensitive period for attachment in human infants
The Parent’s Attachment to the Infant

Synchrony

- The opportunity for parent and infant to develop a mutual, interlocking pattern of attachment behaviors
- Takes practice over time to develop until each participant follows the other
- Highly synchronous 6 – 8-month-old infants
  - Have larger vocabularies at age 2
  - Have higher intelligence scores at age 3
# The Infant’s Attachment to the Parents

## Attachment Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• Stranger Anxiety</th>
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<td>─ Cling to mother when strangers are present</td>
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<table>
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<th>• Separation Anxiety</th>
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<td>─ Infants cry and protest when separated from mother.</td>
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<table>
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<th>• Social Referencing</th>
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<td>─ Use cues from caregiver facial expressions</td>
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<td>• Helps to figure out novel situations</td>
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<td>• Helps to learn to regulate emotions</td>
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Secure and Insecure Attachments
Mary Ainsworth

- The Strange Situation
  - Series of eight episodes played in a laboratory
  - Children between 12 and 18 months

- Secure attachment
- Insecure/avoidant attachment
- Insecure/ambivalent attachment
- Insecure/disorganized attachment
Attachment Quality: Long Term Consequences

The Securely Attached

- More sociable
- More positive in relationships with friends
- Less clinging and dependent on teachers
- Less aggressive and disruptive
- More emotionally mature

- Continues into adolescence
  - More likely to be leaders
  - Have higher self-esteem
Attachment Quality: Long Term Consequences
The Securely Attached

- Increased sociability throughout early, middle, and late adulthood
- Affects their parenting behaviors
- Demonstrates that the attachment relationship can become the foundation for future social relationships
Personality, Temperament, and Self-Concept

- **Personality**: stable patterns in how people relate to those around them
- **Temperament**: basic behavioral and emotional predispositions
- Dimensions of Temperament
  - Thomas and Chess
    - Easy child – 40%
    - Difficult child – 10%
    - Slow-to-warm-up child – 15%
Effects of Nonparental Care
Effects on Cognitive Development

• High-quality day care has beneficial effects, especially for children from poor families

• Middle-class children who entered daycare in the first year of life had lower reading and math scores than poor children who began daycare before age 1
Effects of Nonparental Care

Effects on Social Development

- Infant daycare has negative effects on attachment if started under one year.
- Parents whose behaviors are associated with insecure attachment have children who are negatively affected by early day care.
- Belsky associates early day care with greater risks for social problems in school-age children.
Effects of Nonparental Care
What’s Responsible?

- Nonparental care may induce child stress causing higher levels of cortisol
  - May affect child’s brain development
- Shy children may be more sensitive to stress in center-based care
- Boys more insecurely attached to caregivers in nonparental care BUT
- Differences between children in parental and nonparental care are very small