Chapter 6
Socioemotional Development in Infancy
Important Terms

- **Emotion**
  - Strong and informative cues about the infant’s current state

- **Temperament**
  - Reflects stable, biologically based differences in behavior that affect the child’s interactions with social and physical environment

- **Attachments**
  - Specific, lasting, social relationships with others
Development of emotional expressions
  • Primary emotions (joy, surprise, sadness, anger, fear, shyness)
  • Secondary emotions (embarrassment, pride, shame, guilt, envy)

Express emotions with verbalization and gestures
Expressions of
- Smiles in first month
- Sadness – 2 ½ months
- Joy – 2 ½ months
- Fear and anger – 3-4 months
- Laughter – 3-4 months

Mothers may socialize their infants’ expressive styles from the early months of life.

Secondary emotions increase as infant becomes self-aware.
Development of Sensitivity to Emotional Signals

- Reading and recognizing emotional signals

- Resonating or matching adult expressions
  - Mirror neurons
  - Respond to vocalizations

- Social referencing
  - Use of others’ emotional expressions to interpret ambiguous events
**Temperament**
- Biologically based source of individual differences in behavioral functioning
- Affected by the interaction between innate predispositions and experience

**Measuring Temperament**
- Interview parents
- Observations
Attachment and Infant Social Development

Bowlby

- Environment of evolutionary adaptedness – survival depended on close relationships with protective adults
- Phases
  - Indiscriminate Social Responsiveness (1-2 months)
  - Discriminate Sociability (2-7 months)
  - Attachments (7-24 months)
  - Goal-Corrected Partnerships (Year 3 onward)
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

John Bowlby: Attachment Theory
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
How do attachments form?

- Predisposition to form attachments
  - Sensitive period
  - Attached to persons who have associated with over time and who have consistent, predictable, and appropriate responses
  - Mothers play crucial role in attachment.
How is infant attachment measured?

Strange Situation Assessment

- Insecure-avoidant (Type A)
- Securely attached (Type B)
- Insecure-resistant /ambiguous (Type C)
- Disorganized (Type D)
Video: Attachment: Stranger Anxiety
Reciprocity

- Infants learn that in social interaction, partners take turns acting and reacting to the other’s behavior.

Effectance

- Infants learn that his/her behavior can affect the behavior of others in a consistent and predictable fashion.

Trust

- Infants learn that caregivers can be counted on to respond when signaled.
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

- **Stranger Anxiety**
  - Cling to mother when strangers are present

- **Separation Anxiety - Protest**
  - Infants cry and protest when separated from mother.

- **Social Referencing**
  - Use cues from caregiver facial expressions
    - Helps to figure out novel situations
    - Helps to learn to regulate emotions
Infants use attachment figures as a secure base from which to explore and interact with other people.

Sensitive parenting and attuned infant-mother interactions are associated with secure (Type B) attachments.
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
Attachment Security and Infant Temperament

- Temperament does not have direct effect on attachment security.
- Temperament affects quality of infant-parent interaction which in turn affects security.
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%
Attachment and Later Relationships

Attachment security of an infant influences the way in which he/she relates with others later in development.

- Predicts social relationships with peers and siblings
- Associated with prosocial behaviors and mature forms of interaction
- Associated with superior problem-solving
Figure 6.3: Attachment Styles Across Cultures
Parental Behavior and Interaction with Infants

- **Contact comfort: Gratification derived from touch**
  - Harlow’s research

- **Mothers and Fathers**
  - Mothers more likely to spend time with infants than fathers.
  - Fathers tend to view themselves as helpers rather than as having primary responsibility.
Removed infant rhesus monkeys from their mothers and gave them a choice of two substitute models

- A “mother” constructed of wire
- A “mother” constructed of terry cloth

The infant monkeys preferred the terry cloth “mothers” to wire “mothers” even though the wire mothers provided milk

- Example of contact comfort
Figure 6.5: Family Structure and Children’s Self-Control

![Bar chart showing the percentage of children who show self-control based on family structure.]

- **Two biological or adopted parents**: 70%
- **One biological parent/one stepparent**: 60%
- **One biological parent**: 50%
- **No biological parents**: 40%

**Family structure**
Quality of infant care important
- Health and safety
- Small groups
- Each child has primary caregiver
- Continuity of care
- Responsive caregiving
- Meeting individual needs
- Cultural and linguistic continuity
- Stimulating physical environment

Does not disrupt attachment relationship
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.
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
Video: Daycare

DOES DAY CARE MAKE KIDS BEHAVE BADLY?
NEW STUDY SAYS YES
Differential socialization of male and female infants
- Sex-typed colors and toys
- Parents interact preferentially with same sex child.

Infants show preferences of sex-typed toys
- Sex-typed preferences promoted by social environment.
Video: Perceiving Gender Roles: Age 0-2