

Attachment Seeking / Relationship Building

Attachment is the emotional bond that forms between infant and caregiver, and it is the means by which the helpless infant gets primary needs met. It then becomes an engine of subsequent social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Children who are securely attached as infants tend to develop stronger self-esteem and better self-reliance as they grow older. These children also tend to be more independent, perform better in school, have successful social relationships, and experience less depression and anxiety. Those with attachment difficulties or an insecure attachment style are more likely to display risky behaviours, present with behavioural problems, and experience difficulties with emotional regulation, such as impulsivity. They may also get labelled as being "attention seekers".



Referring to a child's behaviour as "attention-seeking" can come with its problems. This child will feel neither seen nor heard, meaning they will turn up the 'volume' even louder in order to have their needs met. They may also shut down and cease to seek a connection, turning their attention to other sources to have their needs met and gain emotional regulation.

Attachment seeking stems from a child's need to remind you that they exist. In their world, they feel they need and deserve more attention than they have been

receiving. Renaming from attention seeking to attachment seeking allows us to analyse the behaviour in a more positive perspective

Being aware of this, we are able to see that children do not engage in challenging behaviours for attention. They engage in behaviours because they are struggling and seek out a connection in order to manage their struggles.

By replacing the idea of children seeking attention with children wanting a relationship, we become more present; listening, understanding, and developing compassion. Children need us to listen to them, validate their feelings and take them seriously.

To promote emotional consistency and attachment, it is essential that children have designated quality time with their parent(s)/carer(s). This should involve the adult entering the child's world, being completely present in the moment and without distraction, which will build trust and confidence in the relationships. This can be as simple as having ten minutes of quality time a day, such as playing a game of the child's choosing. If other adults enter a child's life, such as other relatives or teachers, they will need to take the time to build trust with the child first before expecting them to engage in activities.

How do you build a successful relationship with a child?



1. Say "I love you" often.
2. Set boundaries, rules, and consequences.
3. Listen and empathise.
4. Play Together.
5. Be available and distraction-free.
6. Eat meals together.
7. Create parent-child rituals.

Notes:

