

ATTACHMENT

Attachment is the emotional bond that forms between a child and the adults in their life. Children develop a sense of safety, emotional well-being, and belonging through secure attachment. Whether you are a parent, caregiver, or educator, you play an active role in fostering secure attachment.

Why It Matters:

- Creates trust in relationships
- Supports independence through emotional security
- Builds empathy and resilience
- Supports self-esteem and positive self-image
- Promotes healthy boundary setting in relationships
- Encourages curiosity and a willingness to try new things and make mistakes
- Supports problem-solving and self-regulation skills

Fostering Secure Attachment with Children

- Be present. Find time in the day to be fully present with the child. Put away screens and to-do lists and connect. This connection time will look different depending on the age of the child, but it is important in all relationships.
- Stay calm through big emotions. When the child is upset, resist the urge to shut down or distract them from big feelings. Instead, offer calm, steady presence and validation.
- Follow their lead in play. Allow the child to make decisions about how they play and show interest in their choices.
- Give time for physical touch. When you hug the child, let them hold on until they decide to pull away. Physical affection, when respectful and child-led, supports a sense of safety and connection.
- Ease separation anxiety with connection tools. If separation is challenging, use symbols of connection like imagining an invisible string between you or providing a photo of you they can keep close.
- Make eye contact. Give the child warm eye contact throughout the day, particularly when they are trying to tell you something or engage with you. This is a nonverbal cue that they are seen and valued.
- Delight in the child. Show them you genuinely enjoy being with them.
- Understand the "why" behind behaviour. Remember that behaviour is a form of communication. Instead of punishment or isolation, try to identify and meet the underlying need. A child who "acts out" may be asking for connection.
- Respect differences. Attachment may look different across cultures and families. What matters most is that children receive consistent love, care, and responsiveness.

See the Transitions resource guide for more support around attachment during separation.



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How to Support Yourself

An important step toward secure attachment is self-awareness. Pay attention to your own parenting styles and reactions. Ask yourself: "What tends to trigger me? Is it mess, aggression, fear, sadness?" These triggers are often related to your own upbringing and experiences of attachment. Reflecting on these patterns isn't always easy, but it's an essential step toward breaking unhealthy cycles and creating new dynamics.

Building secure relationships can be complex, particularly if you've experienced insecure or challenging attachments in your own past.

Need More Support?

Local Resources:

- Circle of Security Parenting Groups ([Circle of Security International](#))
- Family Physicians, Pediatricians, or Nurse Practitioners
- Public Health Nurses
- Personal Counsellors and Parenting Coaches
- Local Family Groups

Resources Available at WKCCRR Library:

- Parenting from the Inside Out by Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell
- Raising a Secure Child by Kent Hoffman, Glen Cooper, and Bert Powell

Podcasts:

- "[The Securely Attached Child](#)" with Dr. Tina Payne Bryson
- "[The Truth About Secure Attachment](#)" with Bethany Saltman

Videos:

- [Being With and Shark Music](#)

Online Resources:

- [Parenting Through Stories Blog](#)
- [Dr. Vanessa LaPointe - What Is Attachment Parenting?](#)
- [What Is Attunement?](#)
- [Family Connections: A Resource Booklet for First Nations and Métis Parents](#)
- [Parenting from the Outside In - Refrigerator Sheet](#)