



Attachment and Infants

What is attachment? Attachment is a two-way process that is deeper and lasts longer than just a relationship. The mother is always the first and primary attachment the baby makes, but more and more babies are becoming strongly attached to their fathers early on. Babies can make secondary attachments to people other than their parents. When they go off to child care at an early age these secondary attachments become very important.

Attachment to caregivers differs from that of parents in many ways. One obvious way is duration. The long term, even lifetime attachment one expects as a parent gives way to a much shorter period for care giving.

In the ideal situation, where the parents and alert newborn are allowed time together to get acquainted, what is called “bonding” may occur when they fall in love in a very short period of time. Attachment grows more slowly over a longer period of time for the caregivers. It is important for babies to build a trust and this takes time.

At Room For Growing we provide a primary caregiver at the babies’ time of enrollment. We feel it is important to develop attachments with your child as soon as possible. The primary caregiver is sensitive to your babies needs; they will feed, change, rock and play with your baby. Soon your infant will recognize the primary caregiver as one who will meet their needs. They will gaze and sometime cry when she leaves. This is normal.

Our caregivers understand that parents may fear their children may gain secondary attachments outside the home at the expense of their primary ones parents. Our caregivers want to help ease your fears by letting you know they are unfounded. The Secondary attachment is in addition to the primary ones—not a replacement for them It may comfort you to know that these feelings are a sign that attachment is strong and it will hold.

FOR FURTHER READING

- Janet Gonzalez and Dianne Widmeyer” Infant, Toddler, and Caregivers”
- J Bretherton and E, Waters eds., “Growing Point of Attachment Theory and Research”