

Attachment

Attachment: The powerful bond of love between a caregiver and child (or between any two people). (page 107).

At the beginning of the 20th century, people assumed that the infant-caregiver bonding resulted primarily from the mother's role in satisfying the infant's needs for nourishment.

Harry Harlow tested this belief by separating infant rhesus monkeys from their biological mothers shortly after birth. Each infant was raised in a cage with two artificial "surrogate mothers".

One was a bare-wire cylinder with a feeding bottle attached to its "chest"

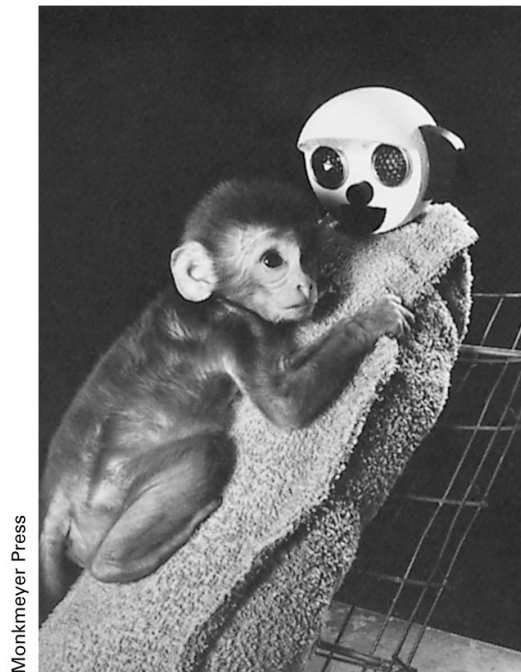


Harlow Primate
Laboratory, University
of Wisconsin

The other was a wire cylinder covered with a soft terry cloth without a feeding bottle.

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When exposed to frightening situations, the infant monkeys ran to the terry cloth figure and clung to it tightly. They even maintained contact with the cloth mother while feeding from the wire mother's bottle.

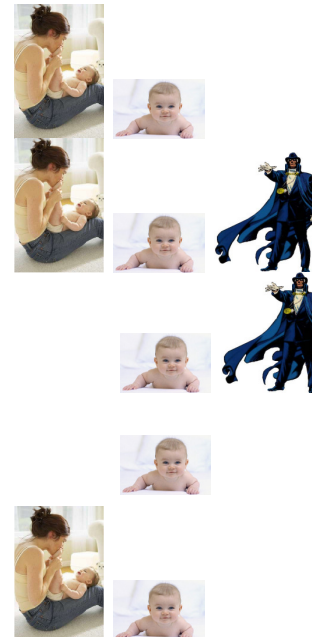


Harlow concluded that the infant monkeys became attached to the cloth mother. Contact comfort—body contact with a comforting object is more important in fostering attachment than the provision of nourishment.

Assessment of Attachment Styles

In order to assess attachment, psychologists have developed a standardized procedure for examining infant attachment called the strange situation when the infant is around 12 to 18 months old.

- First, the infant plays with the mother present.
- Then a stranger enters the room and interacts with the infant.
- Soon, the mother leaves the child with the stranger
- Later, the stranger leaves, and the child is alone
- Finally, the mother returns (the reunion).



The infant experiences a series of introductions, separations, and reunions with the caregiver and a stranger. Psychologists are looking at the balance between the infant's need for attachment and exploration.

Figure 4.2 (page 112): Secure and Insecure Attachments

Secure attachment:
The child is thrilled to see the caregiver.



Avoidant attachment:
The child is unresponsive to the caregiver.



Anxious-ambivalent attachment:
The child cannot be calmed by the caregiver.


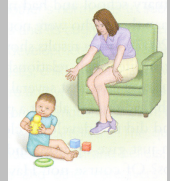



Disorganized attachment:
The child seems frightened and behaves bizarrely when the caregiver arrives.



Top left: Albert Normandin/Masterfile; top right: Rommel/Masterfile; bottom left: Ron Chapple/The Image Bank/Getty Images; bottom right: Carey Kirkella/The Image Bank/Getty Images

Attachment

<p>Approx. 60% of all infants</p> 	<p>With “<u>securely attached</u>” infants,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The infant uses the mother as a “secure base” to explore and return.• The infant explores the playroom and reacts positively to strangers.• They are often distressed when the mother leaves and happily greets her when she returns. Their eyes light up with joy.• If distressed during separation, seeks contact and comfort during reunion, and then settles down to continue play.• Those that are not distressed acknowledge her return with a glance or greeting.
<p>Approx. 20% of all infants</p> 	<p>With “<u>avoidant attachment</u>” infants,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These infants show few signs of attachment or emotion.• Explores freely, seems uninterested in the caregiver’s presence or departure<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seldom cry when the mother leaves,• And don’t seek contact when she returns.• Upon reunion, ignores or actively avoids the caregiver.
<p>Approx. 15% of all infants</p> 	<p>With “<u>ambivalent (resistant) attachment</u>” infants,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infants are clingy, nervous and too frightened to explore the toys.• Demand her attention, and• Distressed when she leaves.• They are not soothed when she returns and both resists and seeks contact showing anger, passivity or clinging.• Does not easily return to play. <p>image source: Gazzaniga and Halpern</p>

Attachment

Disorganized attachment is an insecure attachment characterized by responses such as freezing or fear when a child is reunited with the primary caregiver (page 111).

TABLE 7.3 How Disturbed Mothers Develop Type D (Disorganized) Attachment in Their Infants

Mothers of type D infants are at least three times more likely than mothers of types A, B, and C infants to exhibit these behaviors:

Laugh when infant is crying	Pull infant by the wrist
Invite approach and then distance	Mock and tease the infant
Use friendly tone while maintaining threatening posture	Tell a crying infant to hush
Direct infant to do something and then say not to do it	Ignore an infant who falls down
Display a sudden change of mood, not elicited by the context	Use a loud or sharp voice
Handle the infant as though the infant were not alive	Remove a toy with which the infant is engaged
Display a frightened expression	Hold infant away from body with stiff arms
Withhold a toy from the infant	Speak in hushed, intimate, sexy tones to the infant
Neglect to soothe a distressed infant	Talk in “haunted” or frightened voice

Stranger Anxiety

One thing to note is at about 7 months of age stranger anxiety appears. The baby gets agitated when any unfamiliar person picks them up. The universal friendliness of early infancy is gone.

Babies naturally progress from eliciting responses from anyone, those they are familiar with to specific individuals. This innate behavior is argued to have survival advantages and is this pattern/trend is similar across many behaviors (e.g. vision, hearing, and in general, learning).

Why is this important to learn?

The Attachment “Dance”

The quality of attachment depends not only the personality of the caregiver and child, but how the caregiver and child interact and respond to one another.

The caregiver:

When the parent is sensitive to a baby’s signals, a secure attachment is more likely to occur. This may require focused attention and minimal divided attention. Parents who misread their baby’s signals or are rejecting, disengaged, or depressed are more likely to have infants who are insecure ([page 112](#)).

Women who describe happy childhoods tend to have securely attached babies. Mothers who report dysfunctional early lives are more likely to have insecure 1-year olds. As noted in the textbook, some women, despite having unhappy childhoods, offer their babies loving care, while on the other end, an excellent caregiver may have an insecurely attached child.

The Attachment “Dance”

The child:

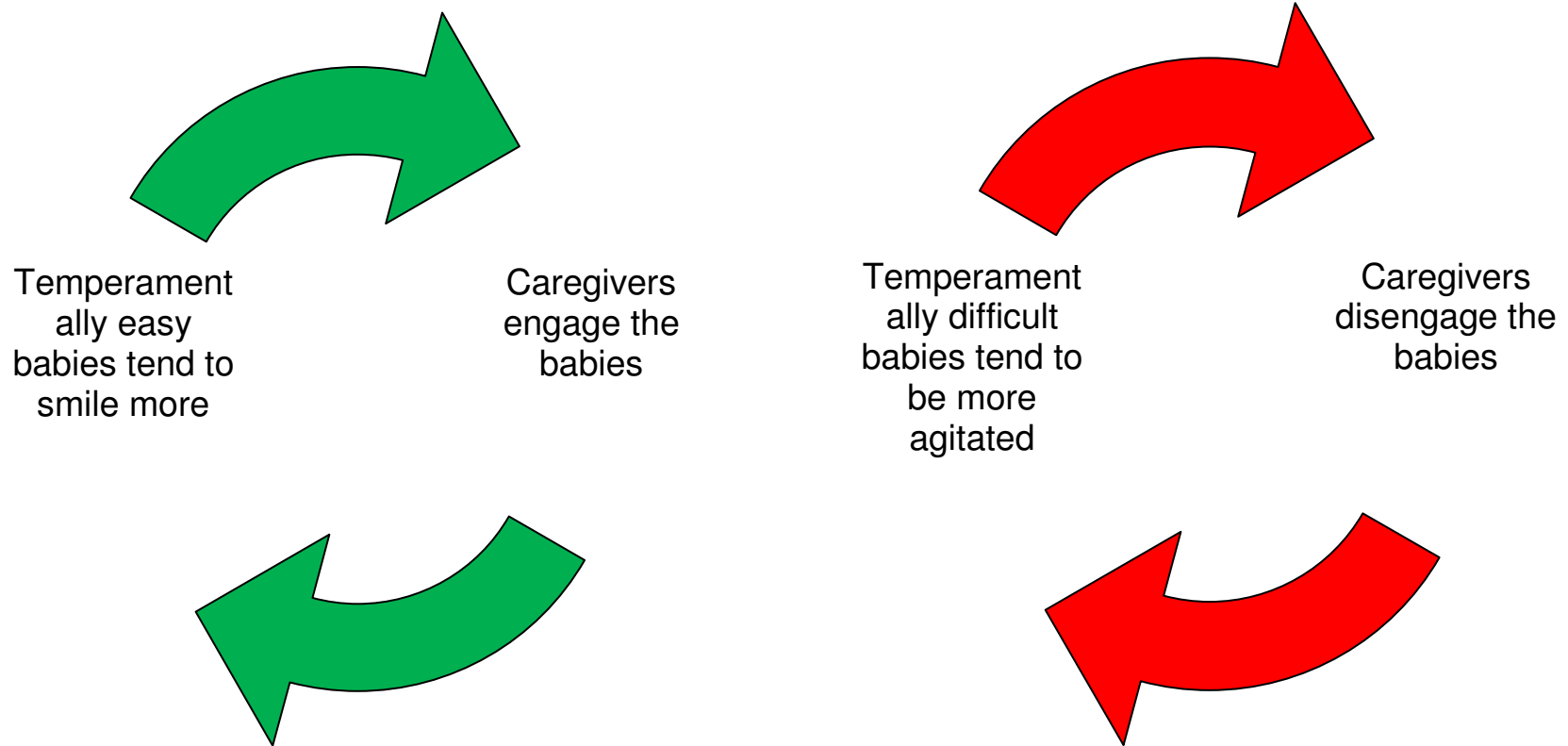
There are three broad temperaments described by psychologists:

- easy,
- slow-to-warm-up and
- difficult (see [page 113](#)) that have a biological component.

Easy babies have predictable sleeping and eating patterns. They tend to be happy and easily soothed. New stimuli produce less intense reactions. Slow-to-warm up tend to be more wary and takes time to adjust to new stimuli. Difficult babies tend to be hypersensitive, usually agitated and more reactive to stimuli ([page 113](#)).

Some psychologists believe that temperament/reactivity determines the quality of attachment than the quality of caregiving at age 1. Temperamentally fussy babies who rarely smile and get agitated when adults pick them up provoke less loving caregiving—especially if the mothers are anxious and depressed ([page 113](#)).

The Attachment “Dance”



The Attachment “Dance”

Other factors influencing attachment:

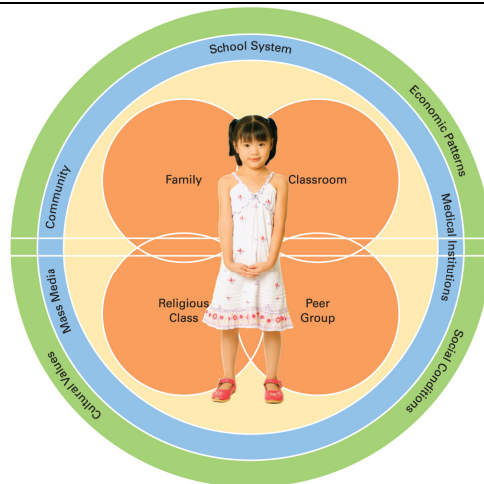
- Relationship with partner (if in a relationship)
- The caregiver’s partner’s relationship to the child
- Other caring attachments of family members, friends and neighbors ([page 113](#))

As your author emphasizes, no parent is an island (though we tend to focus attribution on the parent—the fundamental attributional error). Attachment depends on having a supportive wider world ([page 113](#)).

Table 4.1: Predicting Caregiver-to-Baby Bonding: Four Section Summary Questions

1. Did this person (the caregiver) have a happy childhood?
2. Is this baby temperamentally easy?
3. For couples: Is this relationship loving and are both partners excited about having a child?
4. For single parents: Does this caregiver have other close attachments?

The Ecological, Developmental Systems Approach (page 22)



Belsky, *Experiencing the Lifespan*, 5e, © 2019 Worth Publishers George Shellye/Masterfile
Credit: Red Chopsticks/Getty Images

Ecological, developmental systems approach: An all-encompassing outlook on development that stresses the need to embrace a variety of approaches, and emphasizes the reality that many influences affect development.

Bronfenbrenner was one of the first psychologists to emphasize that real-world behavior has many different causes.

- There are immediate relationships that have a stronger influence on the individual such as the **family, classroom, peer group and religious class** (there may be others) as shown in the center of the circle.
- The next set of influences influence the family, classroom, peer group, etc. and are more indirect and environmental such as the **mass media, community, schools, and medical institutions**.
- Much broader social factors would be our **culture, economic and social conditions**.

Attachment Deprivation





Harry Harlow examined the effect of “attachment” deprivation under controlled conditions with the rhesus monkeys. After rearing “isolate” monkeys either alone or with artificial “surrogate mothers”, Harlow returned them to the monkey colony at 6 months of age.

- The isolates were indifferent, terrified or aggressive when exposed to other monkeys.
- The isolates avoided contact, fled from touch, curled up and rocked, or tried to attack the biggest, most dominant monkey in the group.
- When they became adults, these monkeys were unable to have sex. When given an opportunity to mate with a normally reared monkey, they showed interest, but did not know how to proceed.
- Some female isolates were artificially inseminated, and as parents, they were highly abusive towards their firstborns.
- These mothers seldom petted or caressed their young and even neglected to nurse them.



Secure Attachment

The development of secure attachment occurs over a period of time, and is time sensitive—secure attachments are easier to form in infancy and early childhood. Securely attached infants raised by their parents (regardless if they are adoptive or biological) tend to have positive emotional health, higher self-esteem, self-confidence, and socially competent.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infants who are securely attached are less likely to have behavioral problems or seek attention in the classroom.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure preschoolers were more prosocial, empathic, and socially competent when compared to insecure preschoolers (page 385, SGW)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In middle childhood, children with a history of secure attachment in infancy are better adjusted and have higher levels of social and cognitive development than do children who were insecurely attached in infancy (page 385, SGW)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adolescents who were securely attached in infancy have fewer problems, do better in school, and have more successful relationships with their peers when compared with adolescents who were not securely attached in infancy.

Insecure Attachment

Caregivers of avoidant babies tend to be unavailable or rejecting.

Those with insecure attachment, especially insecure resistant attachment and behaviorally inhibited in early childhood was correlated with adolescent social anxiety.

Those who were insecurely attached to both parents at 15 months of age had more externalizing problems such as acting out or lack of behavioral control in elementary school.

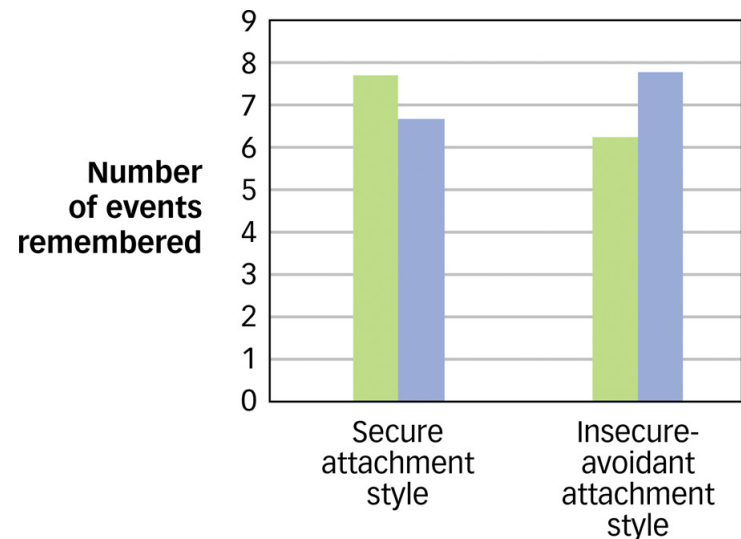
If you can identify parents who engage in inadequate and problematic caregiving and provide with practice and feedback that focuses on sensitive interactions with their infants, secure attachments can be formed.

Consistent positive caregiving over years is likely an important factor in developing attachment and relations with others. The earlier the age attachment develops and maintained, the better.

Attachment Styles and Memory

Infants were identified as having with a secure attachment or insecure-avoidant attachment watched a puppet show.

Attachment style affects what is remembered. Secure attachments tend to remember positive events, whereas the insecure avoidant attachments tend to remember negative events--they all watched the same puppet show.



■ Positive events ■ Negative events

Image source: Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner, 2011, Psychology

Day Care

With over half of American preschoolers who are being cared for by someone other than a parent, social development depends on the quality of the day care. High quality day care tends to be associated with better outcomes than low quality day care.

Characteristics of High Quality day care:

- Provides a stimulating environment with age appropriate activities.
- Day care providers need to have the freedom to make their own choices about what activities to use and how to arrange the class day.
- The day care provides predictable, comforting routines.
- Caregivers balance consistent rules with love.
- Staffed with well-trained caretakers who are responsive to children's needs and empathic to children.
- Low staff turnover for predictability and the ability to form attachments with staff.
- Few children per caretaker
 - Two adults for no more than 6 infants
 - Two adults for no more than 14 toddlers
 - Two adults for no more than 20 4-5 year olds

Table 4.2: Choosing a Day-Care Center: A Checklist

Overall Considerations

- Consider the caregiver(s). Are they nurturing? Do they feel that despite the low pay, they have enough money to live and the freedom to do what they want? Do they adore young children and especially enjoy working in this place?
- Ask about stability, or staff turnover. Have caregivers left in the last few months? Can infants have the same care provider when they move to the toddler room?
- Look for a low caregiver-to-baby ratio (and a small group of children overall). The ideal is one caregiver to every two or three babies.
- Look at the daily routine. Does a structure ritual flow through each day? Are activities clearly laid out, and do caregivers follow these plans? Do teachers stimulate cognition and behave in a loving and predictable ways? (For toddlers and 3-year-olds it's also vital to have safe, age-appropriate play materials, such as blocks and books, as well as dress-up corner, areas for painting near sinks, and places for children to congregate for group activities.)

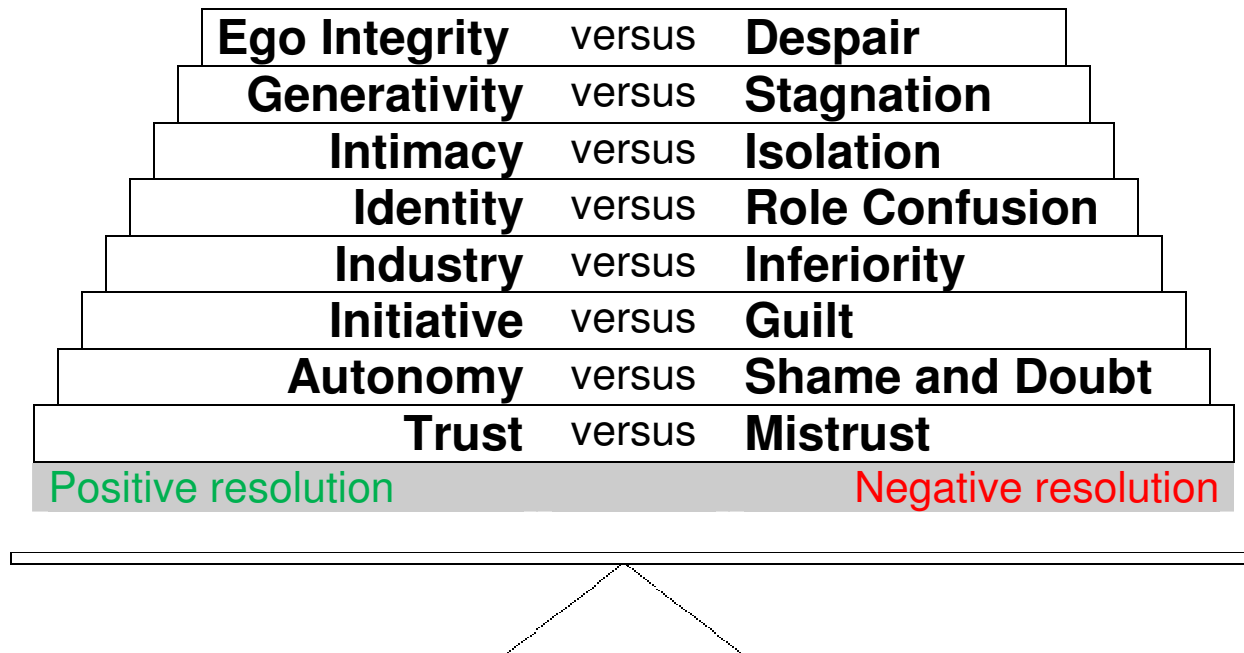
Additional Suggestions

- For infants and toddlers in full-time care, limit exposure by having a child take occasional vacations or build in special time with the child every day.
- Consider the home environment. If a toddler's family life is chaotic or she lives in a dangerous neighborhood, it's better to spend the entire day at the stable, nurturing place.
- Consider the child's temperament. The kind of genetically responsive (highly environment-sensitive) babies I discussed earlier have special trouble coping with less than optimal care; but these same toddlers may flourish in a high-quality setting.
- And finally, for society: Pay child-care workers decently and make day care more affordable for U.S. parents too!

Erik Erikson: Psychosocial Stages of Development

Unlike Freud who believed development ends during adolescence, Erikson believed that development continues beyond puberty across the lifespan based on how the individual deals with conflicts or crises.

The following are Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial conflicts that we need to resolve across the lifespan. Resolutions of these crises or conflicts are NOT an either/or outcome, but rather they tend to be positive or negative. These conflicts continue to occur throughout the lifespan, but have a greater impact at different periods.

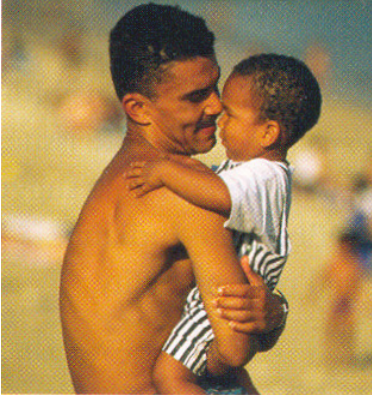


If there are more positive experiences than negative experiences, one has a positive resolution at that stage.

- A positive resolution of each conflict (Erikson called them crises) contribute to a progressive strengthening of the self and a positive resolution at early stages increases the chances that an individual will positively resolve a crisis at late stages.
- A negative resolution of each conflict contribute to a progressive weakening of the self and a negative resolution at early stages increases the chances that an individual will negatively resolve a crisis at other stages.

Trust vs. mistrust (birth to 1 year)

Is the world a stable and predictable place where I can make sense of it OR is it unstable and unpredictable?

Trust	Mistrust
<p>The infant develops the belief that world is an orderly and predictable place. It is orderly.</p>  <p>(image source: Carpenter and Huffman)</p>	<p>The infant develops the belief that world is NOT an orderly and predictable place. It is chaotic.</p>


Development of Trust:

- Reliance on consistent and warm caregivers produces a sense of predictability and trust in the environment.
- When the mother leaves the infant's sight, the infant will not become overly anxious that the mother will still be around to meet its needs.

- Parents that tend to be warm, responsive and sensitive to the infant's needs, have infants that more likely to be securely attached.
 - Preschoolers with a history of secure attachment tend to be more prosocial, empathic and socially competent.
 - Adolescents with a history of secure attachment in infancy have fewer problems, do better in school and have more successful relationships with their peers compared to those who were insecurely attached in infancy.
- Infants that are insecurely attached are when parents tend to be neglectful, inconsistent, or insensitive to the infant's moods or behaviors.

Autonomy versus shame and doubt (1 year – 2 years)

Can I do things for myself OR do others need to do it for me?

Autonomy	Doubt
<p>The infant/child believes that he/she can act independently, they control of their actions and their actions influence their environment.</p>  <p>Caregivers encourage independence and self-sufficiency, self-confidence, promoting positive self-esteem.</p>	<p>The infant/child has doubts about acting independently, believes that their behavior is not under their control but is determined by other people and external forces.</p>

Development of autonomy and self-control:

- When a child starts to explore the world around them, they see if their behavior influences their world, they start to make decisions for themselves and believe they can do things for themselves.
- Parents need to gradually guide their children's behavior when they want to make decisions for themselves to let the child know that they can engage their environment and do things for themselves.

Development of shame and doubt:

- If parents always insist on feeding a child, the child may begin to doubt his or her ability to perform this activity.
- If parents are either too permissive or too harsh and demanding, children experience a sense of defeat and doubt.

Socialization: When Can Children follow Unwanted Directions When a Parent isn't in the Room

Both genetics and parenting are involved in a child's self-control. Caregivers who label a toddler's emotions ("You are really upset about that!") can help coach children to manage disappointment without immediately lashing out. ([page 124](#)).

Fearful toddlers tend to be more obedient. Inhibited toddlers tend to be fearful through childhood and overfocus on threatening stimuli in their teens. When shown a stranger's face on a screen, those who have an inhibited personality/nervous system show more brain activity for negative emotions. As we grow older and more comfortable with our surroundings, we may become less inhibited.

Socializing a shy baby:

When someone has a fearful response, the impulse is to "back off" and not pressure the child. This tends to make the child more cautious in the future. With shy children, be caring but provide a gentle push, guidance, encouragement and support when in a new or distressing situation to help teach children to cope. ([page 126](#))

Socialization: When Can Children follow Unwanted Directions When a Parent isn't in the Room

Raising a Rambunctious Toddler

Exuberant, joyful, fearless, intrepid toddle-explorers are especially hard to socialize (page 125). When the rambunctious toddler can't seem to control themselves, parents may resort to the assertion of power (a strategy that involves yelling, screaming or hitting a child) or giving up on any discipline.

Either strategy tends to be unproductive. (page 126, 127). Assertion of power tends to make children more rebellious and learn that that yelling, screaming or hitting is the appropriate means to get things done (see Modelling from chapter 1) and disengagement does not provide children the structure they need (see parenting styles in chapter 7).

If a 2-year old whines, reasoning and emotion coaching are most effective. These take time and talking about emotions is generally something that American culture does not emphasize. With disruptive behavior such as hitting or biting, the best response is to set firm limits and immediately putting the child in a time-out (withdraw them from the situation). (page 127). What appears to be important is the formation of a secure attachment.

Socialization: When Can Children follow Unwanted Directions When a Parent isn't in the Room

Although temperamentally difficult babies were more likely to have problems with their teachers and peers, some children learned to compensate for their reactive biology to become well adjusted. A key to success is a strategy called goodness of fit—a strategy that involves arranging children's environments to suit their temperaments, while minimizing their vulnerabilities and focusing on their strengths.

For the children who were easily overwhelmed, parents were attentive to signs of being overwhelmed, took measures to reduce overstimulation, and encouraged them to focus on their strengths that were not overly stimulating. If they tend to have a need for stimulation, parents providing activities that were more stimulating were better adjusted. The importance is having the right person to environment fit ([page 128](#)).

Table 4.4: Exuberant and Inhibited Toddler Temperaments: A Summary

Inhibited, Shy Toddler

- **Developmental precursor:** Responds with intense arousal to external stimulation in infancy.
- **Plus:** Easily socialized; shows early signs of conscience; not a discipline problem.
- **Minus:** Shy, fearful temperament can persist into adulthood, making social encounters painful.
- **Child-rearing advice:** Don't overprotect the child. Expose the baby to unfamiliar people and supportive new situations.

Exuberant Toddler

- **Developmental precursor:** Emotionally intense but unafraid of new stimuli.
- **Plus:** Joyous; fearless; outgoing; adventurous.
- **Minus:** Less easily socialized; potential problems with conscience development; at higher risk for later "acting-out" behavior problems.
- **Child-rearing advice:** While calm reasoning works best to quell whining, employ time-outs for defiant behavior. But, above all, use lots of love.