

Section 1: Key Person and Attachment



Why is it important?

'We are shaped by other people as well as by what we breathe and eat. Both our physiological systems and our mental systems are developed in a relationship with other people and this happens most intensely and leaves its biggest mark in infancy.' (Gerhardt, 2004)

This section is about developing attachment relationships with children. It is through this process that the key person is able to nurture children's well-being and best meet their unique needs.

What is Attachment?

Attachment is a deep and enduring connection between the child and the main carer established in the first several years of life. It profoundly influences the mind, body, emotions, relationships and values (Levy and Orlans, 1998).

Attachment refers to the nature of a special relationship that is very close. It is central to our survival and our well-being.

How does it develop?

Attachment develops through the everyday interactions between the baby/child and their main carers and as a result of the adult's responses to their needs. It is not something that parents do to their children, but rather, it is something that parents and children create together. It is an ongoing give-and-take relationship (Levy and Orlans, 1998).

Babies and young children are able to develop several strong attachment relationships with important people in their lives, like parents, grandparents and siblings. Developing these strong bonds with other people does not detract from the strong bonds made with parents.

Get active!



Activity 3: Superhero cooperation

Why? This helps children learn that they need to work together to make some things happen.

How?

Tyre pull: Instead of one child pulling a tyre, attach several ropes to several tyres that are tied together. Let teams of superheroes pull the tyres across the playground.

Box city: Big boxes make great trains, rockets, ships, caves and other superhero homes and vehicles. Children can draw doors and windows and the key person can cut them out. The boxes can be decorated.

Connect the boxes with tape to make them a shared construction. Add carpet, pillows and blankets to make them cosy. Use chalk or masking tape to create roads between the buildings and bring in small trucks to make deliveries.

Activity 4: Small world superhero play

Why? This is another way of creating stories about superheroes. Small world play provides an opportunity for children to create their own spontaneous stories; they can use their imagination and take the story to wherever it wants to go.

Small world superhero play is a valuable way for children to play out concerns they may have. For example if there is something frightening them they might make up a narrative in which the superhero helps someone to overcome a fear.

Resources: Superhero figures, ensuring a range of female and male heroes, a variety of extras such as boxes, pebbles, treasure, other figures, vehicles. Materials to create places to live; the list is endless.

How? Provide this play in various places in your setting, such as in the construction area or block area, sand, or anywhere there are additional materials to use. Provide some pictures, comics, and books in the area.

Get active!

The environment

Activity 1: Providing an 'intelligence rich' environment

Why? To ensure children can choose how to learn in a way that interests them.

Resources: Combine resources, for example, put the dinosaurs in a large tray with some water, large stones, and sand, add drawing paper to the car track to continue the roadway, put candles, or scissors with the play dough, add streamers for dancing, put play people with the block play. Add resources for role play, a shop, hospital, vets or garage. There are endless possibilities.

How? Check you have these areas, activities and equipment as part of your everyday continuous provision.

Visual-spatial: Building blocks and construction equipment, puzzles, painting and drawing.

Bodily-kinaesthetic: Physical play equipment that challenges each age range, role play, sensory experiences like water, sand, playdough.

Musical: Musical instruments, dancing and singing.

Interpersonal: Group activities like singing, games, stories, role play, tents and spaces to chat.

Intrapersonal: Quiet places, sufficient popular resources for all children so that they can play alone through choice.

Linguistic: Books, rhyme and story times, writing materials in role play and as a special area for older children.

Logical-mathematical: Construction, pattern making resources, loose materials to combine, water play with equipment that challenges different ages, e.g. filling and emptying for younger children and pipes and gutters for older children.

Naturalist: Natural materials inside and outdoors, good access to outdoors throughout the day.



Activity 2: Providing a culturally rich environment

Why? To ensure that all children feel a sense of belonging in your setting, and to help them learn about the wider world.

How? Wherever possible, a culturally diverse staff group, who reflect the cultures within the community, can help children feel at home within the setting.

Consider the different areas of your setting.

- Does the entrance area feel welcoming for all families? Consider language, décor, posters, furniture, children's work, the local community
- Are posters and signs in the bathroom meaningful for all families?
- Does each play room and the outdoor areas reflect the cultures of the children within the room and of the wider world?

Consider:

The role play area - food, cooking utensils
Dressing-up clothes
Toys like dolls, small world people
Music and instruments
Displays, language, art
Puzzles and Books.

Celebrations and festivals

- As well as celebrating these at special times of the year, have the resources available so that children can play with them throughout the year
- Play music from around the world for dancing and playing musical instruments
- Show dancing from around the world, use YouTube <http://www.arcmusic.co.uk/>

Case study: Nursery Y

We ask parents for photos of their family, extended family, the pets, favourite toys, the car, important people and places in their lives. We make a little 'home book' which we use with our youngest children to help with their separation from home and parents.

Get active!

Activity 3: Provide an environment where both girls and boys can flourish

Why? To ensure that all the girls and all the boys in our care have the best chance of developing a wide range of understanding and skills.

Resources: All resources, some of which appear to be stereotypical such as cars, dolls, trains, pink things. These resources **are the medium for learning**.

How? Use the toys in ways that attract different children to the activities.

Girls

- Put play people and small dolls with the construction toys
- Have some pink tunnels or climbing equipment
- Have balls with Disney characters on them
- Have pink and purple lego and construction equipment
- Provide inset and other jigsaw puzzles that attract boys and girls
- Encourage boys and girls to engage in STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, **M**aths) to make something such as a simple bed for a doll, using a pulley system to hang washing up to dry, mixing paint with a variety of different ingredients
- Provide a selection of beads, shiny 'jewels', tiny golden hearts, animals, flowers, to create patterns
- Provide a variety of small interesting boxes and fixing materials for making things
- Make sure that girls spend time on the computer playing spatially orientated computer games.

Boys

- Put writing paper alongside the garage and cars for drawing extra roads
- Provide dinosaurs and soldiers to get them talking and making up stories
- Put the fire engines and diggers near to the dolls house to develop their story making
- Provide stories on a CD so the boys can operate the CD player by pressing the pause and start buttons and wearing headphones
- Provide computer games that focus on letters, sounds, rhyming and other necessary literacy skills
- Actively encourage physical play and acknowledge developing skills
- Provide books, such as Thomas the Tank engine that boys like that focus on feelings and emotions
- Have a class pet and encourage the boys to develop nurturing skills as they look after it
- Use superheroes as a movement theme.

Activity 4: Provide constant areas, with an occasional air of the unexpected

Why? Continuous Provision is essential because children need to know what and where they can play without having to search for resources and equipment. Daily opportunities to play like this can lead to 'mastery' or higher level learning. If resources are changed too often children can remain in the exploration stage, finding out what the resource does. Once they know what the resource does they can use that resource to enhance and develop their play and learning.

Resources: Everything! Equipment and materials available each day, and extra resources to add to these familiar areas.

How?

Constant areas (Continuous provision): Keep your areas like role play, construction, art, reading and mark making, and the outdoors the same, with the same basic resources.

Occasional air of the unexpected (Enhanced provision): Provide extra resources to extend learning in response to children's interests and fascinations, to ignite children's imagination and to introduce new learning. Over time, add the extra resources to the continuous provision and then provide other extra resources.

Ideas are endless, here are just a few examples:
Water: a fishing game, boats and play people, stones, shells, fir cones, corks, sea creatures, babies to bath
Role play: shop resources, play dough,
Wheeled toys: buckets and sponges for a car wash
Block play: superheroes, dolls, small world, dinosaurs, natural resources
Sand: a jug of water, shells, buried treasure!



Activity 7: Circle time, Smiling

Why? Smiling is a simple way of showing that you are pleased and feel happy. It makes the giver and receiver feel good .

How?

Tell children that the theme is smiling.

Children take turns to pass a smile around the circle

Ask, "How do you feel when people smile at you?"

Model, 'I feel... better... when people smile at me'

Say, 'if you smile at people you make them happy'

'What else can you do to make your friend happy?'

Model, 'I make my friend happy when...I hold her hand... share my chocolate'

Ask, 'How do you look when you are feeling happy?'

Helpful hint: Comment on how you think children are making each other happy as you observe them playing together, 'I think Samir is very pleased that you are playing with the train with him'.

Activity 8: Circle time, Friendship

Why? This helps children to understand how friends behave, and how to be a good friend.

Resources: Soft toy, large piece of paper and felt pen.

How?

Explain they are going to think about friendship

Ask children to say one thing about a friend

Model and say, 'my friend plays with me' or 'my friend hugs me when I cry'

Write on large paper everything the children say

Read back and say 'clap your hands if you have a friend who... holds your hand'

Ask children where they should display the words on the paper

Helpful hint: Those children who chose not to speak at the beginning, may say something after they have heard what other children have said.

Develop this by: Passing the sentence: I am a good friend when... I help my friend or 'share my toys'.

Ask them how many friends can play together

What do they do if someone wants to join in their game?

Record as above

Ask children which things are easy to do and which things are hard

You could also ask if it is hard when your friend wants to do something different to you. What do they do?

Activity 9: Circle time, quarrels

Why? Quarrels are part of children's lives, with brothers, sisters and friends. Children learn to talk about their feelings and develop empathy for others.

Resources: Soft toy for passing around the circle.
2 soft toy rabbits

How? Tell children that sometimes friends fall out with each other

Ask them, 'How do you feel when you fall out with your friend?'

Tell the story about two rabbits that fell out with each other.

Story

This is Molly and this is Cuddles. Molly and Cuddles were good friends and usually played with each other. One day they wanted to play with the same ball and both grabbed it. They couldn't agree who should have it first. Molly pushed Cuddles and Cuddles began to cry. The Mummy rabbit was not pleased with either of them.

Ask children: How do you think Molly felt? Child may say 'cross' Ask children to show a 'cross' face

How do you think Cuddles felt? Can you show a... face?

Repeat the words suggested by the children, maybe write on paper

Comment on the words that are the same for both rabbits

Play pass the face, choose a word from the list (or ask a child to) and pass the expression around the circle.

Helpful hint: Some children may find it easier to listen and concentrate if they have something to fiddle with like playdough or Blutak.

Activity 10: Circle time, making up

Resources: 2 soft toy rabbits.

How?

Remind children of the story about Molly and Cuddles

Ask if they can remember the story and Molly and Cuddles felt when they quarrelled

Ask what Molly and Cuddles can do to be friends again

They are likely to say, 'say sorry'

Ask children to think of ways to show they are sorry.

Helpful hint: Suggest children pretend they are Molly and Cuddles falling out and making friends again