

Parent Guides by Project uP!



**Curated for you to have even
better days with your children!**

DISCLAIMER:

This parent guide has been curated for a parent to understand the basics of Bullying, and a few points that could help while dealing with it.

The prevalence of the suggestions made might differ from case-to-case. Please consider a child psychologist before taking any concrete actions.

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"The attachments of both child and parents affect children's physical, psychological, behavioural, and developmental wellbeing."

This Parent Guide covers the following:

- What are attachment styles?
- What are the different attachment styles presently?
- How do attachment styles impact our lives?
 - The Processes of How These Are Formed
- Frequently Asked Questions.

What are attachment styles?

Attachment is a special emotional relationship that involves an exchange of comfort, care, and pleasure.

Attachment styles are characterized by different ways of interacting and behaving in relationships. During early childhood, these attachment styles are centered on how children and parents interact.

A person's attachment style is their specific way of relating to others in relationships.



Meet RIYA!

Riya is a 23 year-old woman who has just started her professional life. While her work and ambition are remarkable, she seems to have very high expectations of her coworkers and gets verbally aggressive when they don't seem to meet them. She is unable to work as a team as she cannot trust them. Whenever she does not receive the affirmation and approval from her superiors for her work, she wonders if something is wrong with her or her work.

In personal relationships, she is overly invested emotionally and time wise and feels 'dysfunctional' when her partner cannot be available for her. As a result, she is labelled as 'clingy' and jumps into frequent, short-term relationships.



Meet ROHAN!

Rohan, on the other hand, avoids intimate relationships. He has internalised all the negative experiences from his previous relationships and feels that something is wrong with him which causes people to leave him. In other aspects, he is kind and responsible and has a positive view of people in general.

However, in his personal relationships, he indulges in what is termed as 'breadcrumbing'- performing small displays of affection for the person he likes, followed by long periods of acting aloof and distant.

Why are we so complicated? We can be our harshest critics and still manage to defend ourselves in the face of external criticism.

Some of us are almost cynical about people and relationships while still experiencing a loneliness and affection void in our lives.

In order to understand what influences our beliefs of our own selves and that of the world around us, many theorists have proposed the idea of attachment styles, which go all the way back to the first relationships we were ever a part of- those with our parents.

What are the different attachment styles presently?

1 Secure Attachment

Secure attachment style refers to the ability to form secure, loving relationships with others. A securely attached person can trust others and be trusted, love and accept love, and get close to others with relative ease. They're not afraid of intimacy, nor do they feel panicked when their partners need time or space away from them. They're able to depend on others without becoming totally dependent.

The Process

To form a secure attachment, it's necessary for parents to create a compassionate environment and have the ability to regulate their own emotions and reactions. They can also help their child learn these skills. **A securely attached child can trust others to be there for them when they need them.**

Children who form a secure attachment grow up to be better able to maintain their unique sense of identity, while still being able to connect with others.

2

Anxious Attachment

Anxious attachment style is a form of insecure attachment style marked by a deep fear of abandonment. Anxiously attached people tend to be very insecure about their relationships, often worrying that their partner will leave them and thus always hungry for validation. Anxious attachment is associated with "neediness" or clingy behavior.

The Process

Children may experience an anxious or preoccupied attachment style when they have a parent who is sometimes there for them but sometimes isn't. These parents tend to leaving the child confused and frustrated. **A child with this type of attachment finds the need to always be attentive in relationships to get their needs met.** When children grow up with an anxious attachment style, they have difficulty trusting that others will be there for them when they need them. They may also continue to feel insecure in their adult relationships.

This is why, parents need to pay attention to how much of the time they are distracted and inconsistent in how we respond to our kids.

"Early attachment experience creates 'internal working models' — life-long templates for preconceptions of the value and reliability of relationships, close and otherwise."

- J Bowlby

3

Avoidant Attachment

Avoidant attachment style is a form of insecure attachment style marked by a fear of intimacy. People with avoidant attachment style tend to have trouble getting close to others or trusting others in relationships, and relationships can make them feel suffocated.

The Process

In an avoidant/dismissive attachment, the parent may meet the child's basic needs, but they will have trouble responding to the child on an emotional level. For the child, the parent may feel like an "emotional desert." Children in this situation learn that the best way to get their needs met by their parents is to act like they don't have any. They adapt by becoming removed from their own emotions and pretending to have an independent stance. **A child with this type of attachment thinks that they should avoid expressing their needs and wants and should keep an emotional distance from others to be safe.**

4

Fearful-avoidant Attachment

Fearful-avoidant attachment style is a combination of both the anxious and avoidant attachment styles. People with fearful-avoidant attachment both desperately crave affection and want to avoid it at all costs.

The Process

In this type of attachment style, the child experiences a deep sense of fear and a lack of trust in others despite wanting close connections. A fearful-avoidant attachment can form when a parent is frightening to their child or when they are frightened by the child. In this scenario, the parent reacts unpredictably. For example, the parent may at one moment laugh and reward a certain behaviour and, at another, explode with anger at the same behaviour. **Because of this unpredictable way of acting, children have no organized strategy to get their needs met. They experience fear without a solution. They want to go to their parents for safety, but the closer they get, the more fear they feel.** Kids need consistency to feel safe and secure. Instead, what they are getting is a parent who is actually terrifying at times. These children often display emotional turmoil and a confusing mix of behaviors, because they lack a basic feeling of safety.

"Attachment allows children the 'secure base' necessary to explore, learn and relate, and the wellbeing, motivation, and opportunity to do so. It is important for safety, stress regulation, adaptability, and resilience."

How do attachment styles impact our lives?

Immediate

John Bowlby suggested that early attachment experience creates 'internal working models' — life-long templates for preconceptions of the value and reliability of relationships, close and otherwise. Attachment allows children the 'secure base' necessary to explore, learn and relate, and the wellbeing, motivation, and opportunity to do so. It is important for safety, stress regulation, adaptability, and resilience. A web of interrelating problems is characteristic, readily leading to vicious circles, of which poor self esteem is an integral part. Children's attachment patterns are substantially influenced by those of their parents.

In any illness, children behave and parents respond in ways influenced by their respective attachment patterns, colouring 'use' of symptoms and professional relationships. Attachment is an important consideration in numerous paediatric problems — behavioural difficulties, infant crying, feeding problems, failure to thrive, poor eye contact, toileting problems, accidents, infections, autism, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), among many. Attachment should be the focus of child protection and substitute care

Later Life

Attachment styles or types are characterized by the behavior exhibited within a relationship, especially when that relationship is threatened. For example, someone with a secure attachment style may be able to share their feelings openly and seek support when faced with relationship problems. Those with insecure attachment styles, on the other hand, may tend to become needy or clingy in their closest relationships, behave in selfish or manipulative ways when feeling vulnerable, or simply shy away from intimacy altogether.

Understanding how your attachment style shapes and influences your intimate relationships can help you make sense of your own behavior, how you perceive your partner, and how you respond to intimacy. Identifying these patterns can then help you clarify what you need in a relationship and the best way to overcome problems.

Developing healthy attachments

The attachment bond is the emotional connection formed by wordless communication between an infant and you, their parent or primary caretaker. This form of communication affects the way your child develops mentally, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. In fact, the strength of this relationship is the main predictor of how well your child will do both in school and in life.

The attachment bond is not founded on the quality of your care or parental love, but on the nonverbal emotional communication you develop with your child. While attachment occurs naturally as you, the parent or caretaker, care for your baby's needs, the quality of the attachment bond varies.

Be sensitive to baby's needs

This is arguably the most important determinant of secure attachment. Try to read baby's signals accurately and respond quickly as often as you can. This is not always easy, especially before a baby learns how to effectively communicate.

Follow your baby's interests

It's important to engage in positive exchanges with baby in which you both attend to the same thing. For instance, if baby wants to work on a less-than-interesting farm animal puzzle, try to make the puzzle more entertaining by adding a narrative. "Look at the chicken piece! What sound does the chicken make?"

This indicates to baby that you want to be involved in the activities they find interesting, and makes for a less frustrating experience than trying unsuccessfully to re-direct their attention to a different activity.

Be in sync with the baby

When engaging in back-and-forth activities, keep an eye on baby's changing needs as the interaction progresses. In order to maintain a mutually rewarding interaction with baby, you will need to adapt to the changing situation with baby.

Tickling is a great example. Try to be in tune with baby's enjoyment of being tickled. What can begin as a hilarious way to entertain baby and yourself can quickly become intrusive if baby grows overstimulated by the activity.

Bring positive energy around them

Expressing positive emotions to a baby instills confidence that you are happy taking care of their needs and will always be around to do so.

Answering some common questions for you!

Does it make me a bad parent if my child doesn't have a secure attachment style?

Having insecure attachment patterns does not necessarily imply putting the blame onto one's parents for how a child turns out to be. Changes in lifestyle, building a more complex social network of friends, teachers and larger social interaction may affect attachment styles and their subsequent effects.

How can my own attachment style influence my kids?

Attachment style is said to have a pivotal role shaping one's self perception and worldview. Along with other dimensions of one's personality, it may impact one's child rearing practices, which might continue the cycle of secure/insecure parent-child attachment across generations.

What role does a child's personality play in their attachment ?

Only a handful of empirical studies detail the developmental interplay between specific personality characteristics of parents, parenting styles, and children's problem behaviors, which constitutes a major knowledge gap.

Is there a time frame by which attachment style will be developed?

In John Bowlby's original account, which was the first significant contribution to the attachment theory, there is a mention of a sensitivity period of six months to 2-3 years by which attachment is formed.

However, later researchers have also suggested different time periods.

What other factors come into play in determining attachment style and its effect?

Science in itself is a self-correcting field. There have been certain intervening variables that have been suggested to play a role in how a child attaches to their parent, or how one's attachment style impacts future aspects of their life such as self esteem.

Some of these variables proposed are mother's education, employment status of parents, presence of siblings, family structures (nuclear vs joint family), all subject to further verification

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