



Attachment and Separation:

Exploring the central theme of infancy and toddlerhood through books

Attachment is all about relationships. Without that healthy first relationship, normal social and emotional development will not occur.

Why Does Attachment Matter?

Research has also shown that children who were securely attached to their mothers as infants:

- are more independent as adolescents,
- have lower rates of mental illness, such as depression and anxiety,
- are more successful with friends, and
- do well in school.

Teachers can help facilitate healthy attachment relationships between parents and children. The attachment relationship between the teacher and child (called a *secondary attachment*) can also have a lasting positive impact on the child and the family.

First things first,

What happens at drop-off time in your classroom?

Behaviors Observed at Drop-Off Time:

Stage 1: Indiscriminate Attachment

Any caring adult will be accepted to meet the child's needs to be fed, changed, and held

Stage 2: Discriminate Attachment

Child begins to show a definite preference for familiar adults

Stage 3: Separation Anxiety

Children in this stage are no longer friendly toward strangers, and will resist care or attention from unfamiliar adults

Stage 4: Stranger Anxiety

Children in this stage experiences distress when they are exposed to people who are unfamiliar to them

Q: How do young children progress through the 4 stages of attachment?

A: *Lots of practice separating and reuniting!*

***Teachers and caregivers can help by facilitating POSITIVE experiences with separating and reuniting

We can do this through BOOKS!

Separations and reunions are the central theme of infant and toddler development.

Books that explore this theme help children:

- Talk about separating and reuniting
- Label feelings and emotions
- Build vocabulary
- Practice separating and reuniting in a safe way
- Build trusting relationships with caregivers