A Secure Base for Babies: Applying Attachment Concepts to the Infant Care Setting

Helen Raikes

A mother, Gina, brings her bright-eyed, two-year-old Megan to the Child Development Center. Diann, who is Megan's teacher and has been since Megan's early infancy, greets Gina and Megan. Megan and Diann's predictable morning routine, with its high-energy greeting and comfortable communication, is both an indicator of the security in their relationship and one of the many ways the relationship is maintained. Their morning ritual is like a dance, with Diann reaching out to Megan, Megan pulling back to Mother for a moment, reaching to Diann, playing a little peek-a-boo, and going finally to Diann, ready to chat about the day. Megan pats Diann's back as they talk. Mother smiles, waves one more time, gives an A-OK sign, and is comfortably off to work, confident that Megan is secure with Diann.

This scenario typifies the day's beginning for a toddler securely attached to her teacher. As the day progresses, Megan will rely on Diann many times for a secure base, comfort, encouragement, problem solving, and joyful interactions. In fact, the relationship with Diann is the reason Megan's infant/toddler daily experience has been so good: Diann, as the teacher to whom Megan is securely attached, is the center *of Megan's infant care experience.*

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The foregoing anecdote comes from the infant/toddler program of The Gallup Organization Child Development Center (CDC) in Lincoln, Nebraska, where attachment principles undergird program philosophy. The purpose of this article is to show the possibilities for drawing upon attachment principles for application in infant care programs, in hopes of increasing the number of infant programs using practices based on these important concepts.

The essence of the attachment paradigm is that infants form affectional bonds with their caregivers and that these affectional bonds create a sense of trust, secure base, and positive expectation in the infants. The sense of trust supports the infant's explorations of the world and becomes the basis for the next stage of emotional development centered around autonomy. Numerous studies show that infants with secure attachments to their *mothers and fathers* are at an advantage for acquiring competencies in language and in cognitive, social, and emotional development (Leiberman 1977; Matas, Arend, & Sroufe 1978; Main & Weston 1981). Now, evidence suggests that secure attachments with *teachers and caregivers* (hereafter referred to as teachers) also offer advantages for infant development.

While there are a few differences between them (Hamilton & Howes 1992), infant-teacher and infant-parent relationships appear to have many characteristics in common (van IJzendoorn, Sagi, & Lambermon

In virtually all high-quality infant/toddler child care settings, each caregiver knows that the most important thing is forming a close relationship with each of "her" babies.

Helen Raikes, *Ph.D., divides her time between The Gallup Organization in Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) in Washington, D.C. At ACYF she is serving as federal project officer for the National Early Head Start Evaluation.*

1992). Some evidence shows that in both infant-mother attachment (Ainsworth et al. 1978) and infant-teacher attachment (Howes et al. 1988) security is established through sensitive, consistent, loving, and appropriate responsiveness. Further evidence confirms that a secure attachment serves the same purpose in each of the relationships—in both, the baby uses the adult as a secure base for exploration, for comfort in times of stress, and as a source of stimulation and joy (van IJzendoorn, Sagi, & Lambermon 1992). Also, children who have secure attachments with their teachers, as is true for children having secure attachments to their mothers, are advantaged in infant care and in their play, interactions, and development (Howes et al. 1988).

For teachers and directors in infant care to apply attachment principles in infant care settings, it will be important for them to understand what babies who have secure relationships with their teachers receive and, likewise, to understand what babies who don't have secure attachments don't receive. Secure attachments with teachers not only benefit those babies who have them, but the lack thereof may well make child care lonely, nonresponsive, and developmentally counterproductive.

An attachment approach: What does it look like?

What do infants and toddlers receive from secure attachments with teachers? What are the benefits to the babies? What do teachers do to promote security? A discussion of these questions highlights the features of security-promoting relationships. The features are drawn, first, from the infant-teacher attachment literature; second, from extending the abundant infant-mother relationship literature; and third, from observations of infants and teachers in the infant care setting of the Gallup CDC. Altogether, the literature and observation demonstrate the benefits of a secure infant-teacher relationship from the baby's point of view and illustrate the importance of secure attachments in mother-substitute care.

Involved teaching and caregiving

In a clutched little hand, Megan carried the flower to Diann. Diann's animated face—eyes wide, mouthing "Oh"—expressed her great delight in Megan's discovery. Diann knelt to Megan's eye level, put one hand on the toddler's chubby fist and the other on Megan's shoulder. The two took turns touching the petals of the flower, exchanging many comments about the colors, and the feel of the flower. They also exchanged glances, smiles, and facial expressions.

This engaged style of teaching, the direct opposite of routine caregiving, is sometimes referred to as "involved teaching" (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook 1992). It is marked by high levels of touching, hugging, holding, engagement, prolonged conversation, and interactive joy. Researchers have found that infants who have secure attachments with their teachers experience greater amounts of involved teaching than do infants not securely attached to their teachers, with less-secure infants more likely to receive routine caregiving (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook 1992). It appears that teachers who interact with children using this involved style create secure attachments, and, reciprocally, children who have secure attachments receive more of this type of teaching, experiencing greater emotional and cognitive richness throughout their child care days. Contrast the experiences of children fortunate enough to receive this kind of richness in child care with the more emotionally barren experiences of those infants and toddlers who can't count on involved responses.

Highly involved teaching is associated with secure infant/toddler–teacher attachment. A baby needs lots of time with a laid-back adult.

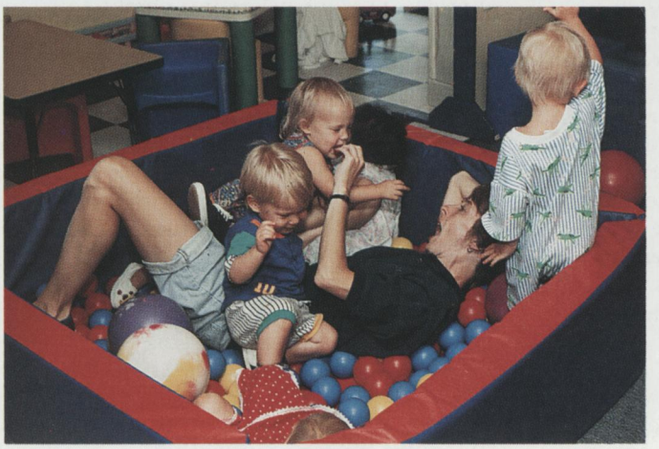
Harmonious separations and reunions

Megan reached out to Diann and wrapped her arms around the teacher as mother headed out the door for work.

Infants often smile, raise their arms, or present positive body orientation when greeting a person with whom they are securely attached. Reunion behavior is one of the best available indices of attachment security (Thompson 1991), so it follows that infants securely attached to their teachers, while not immune from the stress of separating from parents, receive from the positive relationship with the teacher a cushion in their separation. Selma Fraiberg said, "No baby has the psychic means for coping with separation alone without erosion to the developing self" (1979). The separation from parent, which is simultaneously a greeting to the teacher, is an emotion-rich transfer, the full weight of which a loving teacher grasps. Even a child securely attached to the teacher may cross arms two or

three times before negotiating the transfer. The secure attachment to the teacher, however, gives the child someone to go *to,* not just to leave *from.*

In some centers, teachers may attempt to redirect the child from the separation by offering a snack or plaything. Such distractions alone—separated from the teacher's thoughtful support—offer the child a weak outlet for the emotional intensity of the separation. However, a secure relationship with the teacher brings emotional weight to the child's work of containing strong feelings about separation.



Informal interaction is the mode, "instruction" is not.

Secure base for exploration of physical and social worlds

Diann sat in the corner of the room; Megan stayed with her for a while then toddled off to play. After a few minutes she abruptly looked back at Diann as if checking to be sure her teacher was still there. Diann smiled; Megan made a little sound and went on with her play.

Infants and toddlers who are securely attached use the teacher as their secure base for exploring both physical and social worlds. Long established as the cornerstone of attachment, secure-base behavior—whether in primates or human babies—involves a kind of dance. Infants venture to explore, check with the base visually and physically for reassurance, gather information, and then, regrouping, sally forth again.

There are multiple advantages of secure-base behavior for infants: infants explore more, have more productive play, and interact more and more resourcefully with adults in group settings when their attachments to teachers are secure (Howes et al. 1988). Secure infants are emboldened by the teacher's presence across the room, which frees their large stock of energy for learning and loving life.

In some programs a teacher can be observed leaving an infant or toddler room abruptly, setting off a chorus of cries. Abrupt departures reveal a lack of awareness by the teacher of the meaning of her presence to the child. A teacher may even say, "Oh, she's too attached," and leave more often or more abruptly to "break" the child of the attachment. An infant reacting negatively to the teacher leaving the room illustrates a lack of security and needs more, not less, consistency and support to garner emotional sustenance to navigate the environment.

One example from the Gallup CDC involved an infant, new to the program, who was so disoriented by teacher mobility that the teacher, to provide security, sat on the floor during entire play periods for many consecutive days so that this sensitive child could trust that the base would stay put long enough for her to venture out to play. A teacher may be assured that as children deepen their sense of trust, the teacher won't be rooted to the floor forever, and she or he may move naturally, but mindfully, in the environment.

Babies who are securely attached to a caregiver dare to explore, play better, and interact more with others than do babies whose caregivers are ever-changing or emotionally distant.

Stimulation

A loud bus roared by the playground. Megan stared as it rounded the corner and disappeared. Diann, noticing her response, walked over to her and said, "That's a big, big bus."

The secure and exploring child is continuously finding new wonders, and the teacher, ever watching the child, is in a position to note these. Thus, the teacher is likely to expand and comment on the child's subtle learnings. Such a teacher is likely to follow the child's gaze to an airplane flying above and to comment with a positive expression of discovery, "Yes, it's an airplane." Her comment stimulates language learning as well as the joy of discovery. Such observation also nudges a good teacher to bring out the toy airplanes. A less-involved teacher with a child less securely attached might well miss the entire learning opportunity—for example, simply reporting that the child didn't or did "play well." But what did the child do, see, hear, get excited about? The teacher doesn't know.

Physical comfort

Tired Megan crawled into Diann's lap and put her head on her teacher's shoulder.

Harry Harlow (1958) demonstrated the importance of contact comfort in establishing attachment among infant, nonhuman primates. Numerous studies of infant-mother attachment have also verified the importance of touch to infants. In child care settings, infants and toddlers need generous doses of hugging, cuddling, holding, stroking, and lap sitting to

establish their security in relationship with teachers and to meet their deep need for comfort. A child lacking a secure attachment may be more likely to withdraw from physical contact or to exaggerate the need for contact in seemingly insatiable and pronounced clinging. The response in all cases is the same, for the teacher to provide strong but sensitive doses of contact until the child comes to trust that the teacher's touch is there to nourish him or her as needed.

Meeting physical needs

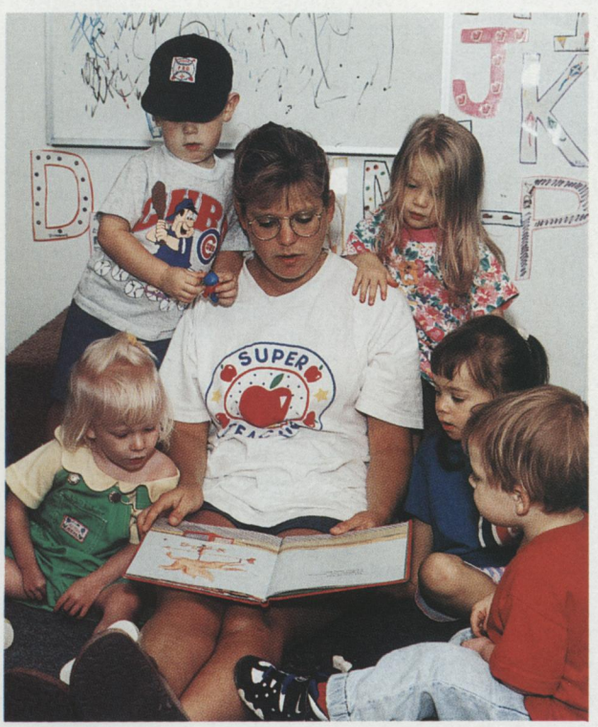
The children had been playing outside for quite a long time. Megan came to Diann and fussed a little. Diann picked her up and asked, "What's the matter?" Megan fussed a little more, and Diann, sensing her need, said, "Would you like to come inside to get a little drink?" She called out to the other children, "Does anyone want to come inside for a drink?"

Mary Ainsworth and her associates (1978) showed very early in the study of attachment that infants whose needs were met appropriately and sensitively were those most likely to develop secure attachments with caregivers. When caregivers respond to infants' discomforts swiftly and well, children develop trust that their needs will be met. An example is the toddler who has learned that his teacher is a good source of comfort for him; he stops crying almost immediately when she comes to comfort him. He may even pat her back as she pats his, showing his expectation of her comforting gesture.

Successful peer relationships

Although they were really young twos, they were very, very good friends. Megan ran to greet Anna. She put her arms around Anna and invited her to come and play in the sand with her. Diann smiled and offered a duplicate set of shovels for the sandpile.

Some very fascinating literature (Howes, Hamilton, & Matheson 1994) is now showing that children whose relationships with teachers are secure also have more positive relationships with peers. The belief is that having a secure relationship with the teacher provides children with mental models for peer relationships in the child care setting and that teachers who are in tune with children also attend to the fine points of the child's interactions with other children. Such sensitive and security-promoting teachers appear to scaffold the child's interactions to promote success and continuation in play with other children.



Small family groups that stay together for two to three years enable children to form secure attachments with teachers.

Support during times of stress

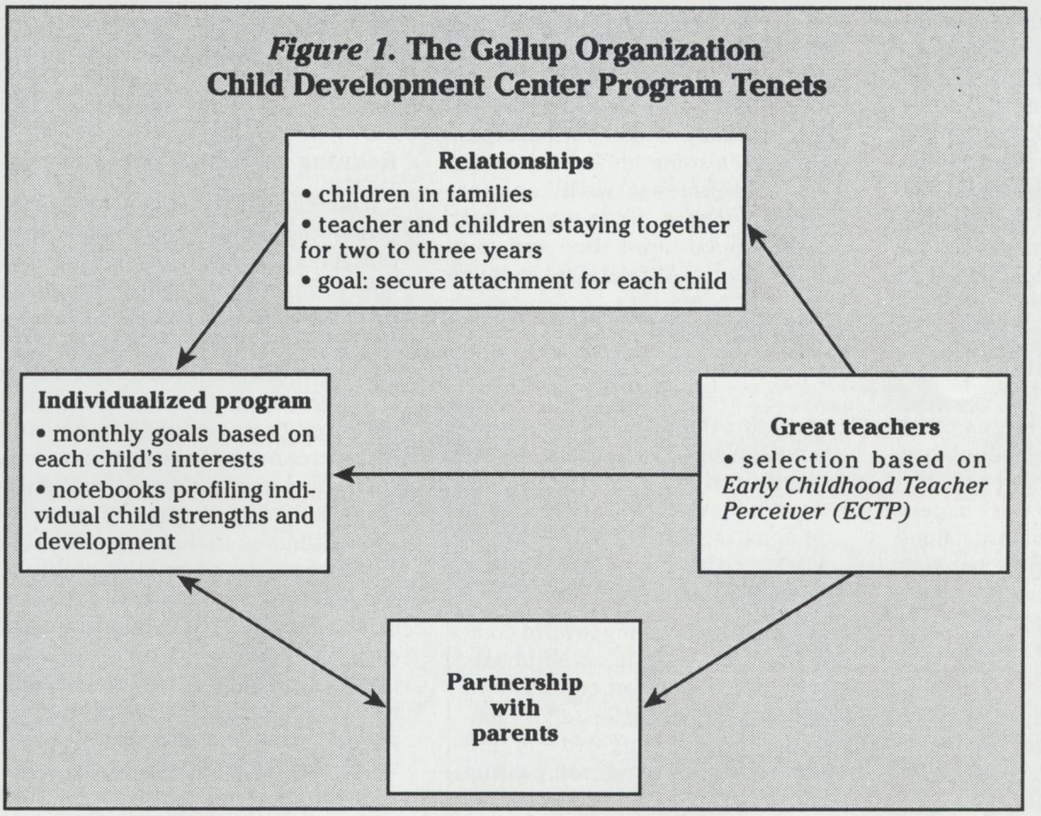
Dustin's parents were divorcing. He seemed fussy, and the teacher commented that he needed to be held often.

It has been the observation at the Gallup CDC that teachers' support is particularly helpful during times of stress for children. Teachers who are close to their children often report child anxiety during such times as a divorce, the birth of a sibling, or family illness. During times of child stress, teachers may give extra hugging, holding, or one-on-one time. They may provide books and stories for older toddlers that help explain the child's situation. The child, due to his or her preexisting trust, appears able to accept the extra resource needed during these times. Among some children not securely attached to parents, Howes and associates (1988) found compensatory attachments to teachers. In such situations, compensatory support from child care gives the child at least one secure base for his or her world.

Altogether, it is clear that the attachment relationships offer many benefits for infants and toddlers. A teacher who envelops the child in involved interaction, provides a warm and predictable greeting, has a sense of herself or himself as a secure base for exploration, offers stimulation in micro interactions, provides contact comfort, and meets basic needs promptly is likely to build security and a buffer for stress in infants. Similarly, an infant whose relationship with a teacher is secure is likely to receive the benefits mentioned. Such relationships increase the likelihood of infants having good days in infant care and put them in good stead for future development.

An example of an infant/toddler program that has used attachment concepts to guide program development

At The Gallup Organization Child Development Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, attachment principles are part of the philosophical ground upon which the program is built. The pro-



gram is organized to give babies the kinds of benefits described above.

The CDC is an employer-owned child care center, serving The Gallup Organization and the Saint Elizabeth Community Health Center. The CDC opened in 1982. It has been licensed for 150 children, at least a third of whom are infants and toddlers (six weeks to age three). The CDC is a part of a larger program of support that Gallup provides employee families. The Gallup Organization was identified in 1995 by *Working Mother* magazine as one of 100 best companies for working women.

The program is organized around four basic program tenets (Figure 1): (1) child-teacher relationships designed to support secure attachments, (2) high-ability-relating teachers able to form quality relationships with children and parents, (3) an individualized program built on child strengths and interests, and (4) partnership with parents.

Child-teacher relationships

The relationship component of the program is begun by organizing all children into small families. Infants are in families of three to five (depending on part- or full-time status) and toddlers are in families of five to seven. Preschoolers and school-age children are also grouped in families of 8 to 12 and 12 to 15, respectively. Infant-toddler teachers stay with their families from early infancy until the children are three years of age.

In the infant/toddler program, the teachers move through different environments with their families of children. Thus, a teacher in this program meets her family in what CDC calls The Infant Room (for infants six weeks to crawling stages), then moves out of The Infant Room with her family and stays with the children until the age of three. Some teachers also have moved with their children to the preschool.

Although teachers and children become a family in The Infant Room, sometimes teachers and parents know they will be paired before the baby is born, and on some occasions a teacher repeats with a second child of the same parents. A teacher doesn't select but rather creates her family as children are assigned to her, typically based on their ages. Once children are assigned, change is seldom necessary. Teachers practice the advice of Greenspan and Greenspan (1989) to "reach out as far as it takes" to do what is necessary to form a relationship with each child. It is assumed that every teacher will have some children who

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will require extension of a long, loving arm. CDC provides teachers administrative support, guidance, and conferencing, as needed, toward building successful relationships.

The importance of extended time with a teacher is evident in the secure-attachment rates in this program over time. After six months with a teacher, the secure-attachment rate is 50%; after nine months it is 67%; and among children who have been with the same teacher for a year, 91% have secure attachments (Raikes 1993). Thus, this program shows that some children form secure attachments with teachers quickly; others, as many as half, seem to need more time and, perhaps, intentional relationship building before the relationship with the teacher is a consistent source of security for them.

Figure 2. Gallup Early Childhood Teacher Themes

Belief—evidence of a value system especially related to family, work, and rightness. A deeper understanding of previous work experiences and satisfaction are gained along with insight into the person's ethics and loyalty structure. Belief is demonstrated by wanting to be of service to others and seeing his or her work as a service.

Pride—a feeling of importance resulting from certain achievements. Knowing how the person views his or her job is determined, as well as a level of self-satisfaction and self-worth. Pride is demonstrated by feeling proud about work well done and wanting praise for work well done.

Responsibility—the person's feeling of psychological ownership for his or her work and his or her behavior. A work orientation is evidenced. Early responsibility and helping others do a job is taken into account. Responsibility is demonstrated by being trustworthy, working as though he or she is doing the work for himself or herself, and doing work without being told.

Team—the ability to build mutually supportive relationships with co-workers. Through this theme the individual describes a level of understanding of himself or herself as well as those around him or her in a work situation. Team is demonstrated by being friendly and helpful, liking co-workers, and being liked by them.

Empathy—the ability to perceive accurately the thoughts and feelings of another person. Sensitivity to what others need in order to function better and how to respond to them in difficult situations is determined. Empathy is demonstrated by sensing how co-workers think and feel and by showing consideration to them.

Gestalt—the tendency toward completeness. There is an emphasis on organization, accuracy, and work performance. Gestalt is demonstrated by being orderly and well organized and completing work on time.

Kinesthetic—the tendency to be physically active. Consideration is given to the stamina, general activity level, and planning of the person. Kinesthetic is demonstrated by being active, working hard, and finding enjoyment in activity.

Mastery—mastery is demonstrated by knowing the job and becoming a specialist in it. The person searches for levels of competency. He or she is open to learning.

Investment—the Investment theme is indicated by a teacher's capacity to receive satisfaction from the growth of infants and children. The satisfaction comes from the response of the learner rather than the performance of the teacher.

Rapport drive—the teacher with rapport likes children and expects them to reciprocate. An approving and mutually favorable relationship with each child is seen as a favorable and necessary condition of learning.

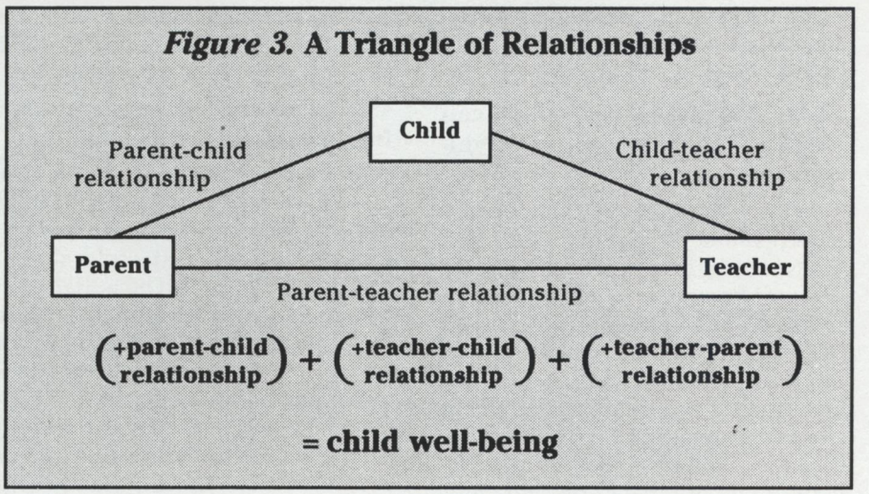
Relating teachers

The teacher is the key to security-promoting relationships. Therefore, CDC hires teachers with a style that favors forming relationships, using as a resource *The Early Childhood Teacher Perceiver (ECTP)* (SRI 1989). The ECTP derives from the SRI Teacher Perceiver (SRI 1978) and is a structured interview that takes about 25 minutes to complete. A profile results, showing each teacher candidate's configuration on 10 key themes (Figure 2). These themes include relationship qualities, such as empathy, ability to see children as individuals, rapport drive, and belief in the importance of early childhood education. The ECTP predicts parent and supervisor ratings (Reckmeyer 1990), and the rapport drive theme and overall ECTP scores have been found to associate significantly with infant-teacher attachment scores in a small sample (Raikes 1991).

Altogether, a teacher identified by the ECTP is believed to be a relating teacher, which puts him or her in good stead for carrying forth the program philosophy. Upon this recommendation from the ECTP, a teacher candidate receives a second, less-structured interview and experiences observation with children before being hired. Sometimes teachers work part-time or full-time in the center in support roles before receiving their own family. Training and teacher development are individualized, dependent on the teacher's background, strengths, and interests.

Because the program philosophy requires continuity, CDC asks new as well as renewing teachers to commit to the two-to-three years it takes children to reach age three. At the end of a cycle, teachers receive encouragement to evaluate their career goals and determine their readiness for recommitting to another family.

The Gallup CDC has had high teacher retention, a necessary factor for long-term infant-teacher relationships. The full-program annual turnover rate is 27% among full-time and



part-time teachers, but among full-time teachers with families, it has ranged from 0–10% per year over a five-year period (Reckmeyer 1992). The retention attributes to several factors: selection, teacher and program mission for early childhood education, committed relationships to children, committed relationships to parents, teacher appreciation for the program philosophy, a positive environment in which to work, a series of program benefits that include reward for excellence, and a relatively stable population base. The base wages and benefits in this program traditionally have not differed from standard rates of pay in child care.

Individualized programming built on child strengths

By caring for a small group of children over an extended period of time, a teacher knows and programs for her children effectively. The teachers at the Gallup center rotate through different areas in the center environment throughout the program day. The way in which program and building space are organized enables each teacher to spend the majority of the program day alone with her or his small family of children.

Day after day the teacher interacts with the same small group, keeps individualized notebook/portfolios for each child, and identifies three process goals a month for each, based on the child's strengths, interests, and emerging development. Month after month, year after year the teacher prepares the child's program using the notebook/portfolio as a medium, conferencing with parents to dialogue around the child's interests, preferences, and talents.

A teacher plants seeds for extending the child's interests and watches those interests grow. Teachers select some beginnings from an infant/toddler curriculum developed through the program (Raikes 1988) as their menu of potential goals and activities, and they add as well from their own repertoire of knowledge and insight. This curriculum—organized in six-month segments, spanning infancy from six weeks to 24 months, and featuring a broad array of activities in cognitive, large- and small-motor, sensory, social/emotional, communicative, and self-help development—provides a structure for the individualized programming.

Partnerships with parents

A final key to developing the infant-teacher relationship is a strong parent-teacher relationship. The visual model used at the Gallup CDC is a triangle (Figure 3) with teacher, parent, and child relationships representing each facet of the triangle. The goal of cumulative positive relationships maximizes the well-being of the child. Over the months and years in the same CDC family, teachers, and parents get to know each other very well. The program encourages parents to give input into monthly goal setting for their child; parents and teachers conference together often; teachers phone parents frequently during the day and may visit the parent at work, as appropriate. Mothers get encouragement to breast-feed, and many are able to nurse on a modified-demand schedule.

Parents evaluate teachers every three months, using a CDC criteria of excellence. These ratings provide teachers with continuous feedback from parents, and guidance from administrators assists them in interpreting the feedback and channeling that into professional growth and improvement. Teachers receive bonuses of $100 a month from a fund supported by Gallup employees when they achieve a minimum of 95% on parent ratings, excellence in completion of the portfolios, and general teaching excellence. Most full-time teachers receive a full bonus each quarter as a result of their consistent excellence.

Summary

The outcome is a very stable program. Relationships formed with children are natural and deep. Altogether, parents and teachers say that they can't imagine any other system better maximizing the well-being of very young children. The children show a happiness and emotional robustness that are the fruit of providing security in relationship during periods of separation from parents at life's beginning.

Opportunities for the infant care field using attachment concepts

Programs such as The Gallup Organization Child Development Center have realized the benefits of applying attachment concepts in an infant care program. The final section of this article underscores the benefits of attention-to-attachment concepts for the infant care field in general.

1. An attachment approach is developmentally appropriate for infant care.

Relationships funnel the world to the infant, providing manageable bites of cognitive, language, and social information that incorporate

into the child's constructions. What the child learns in early relationships appears to be the basis for subsequent relationships. Therefore, a relationship approach to infant care is a developmentally appropriate approach. Attachment concepts provide one of the best ways we know to frame relationships.

Unfortunately, some common practices undermine the very relationship-based developmentally appropriate practice we seek. Consider the common practice of frequent infant "graduations," for instance, the newborn to the crawlers' to the walkers' room. Consider rotation of teacher responsibilities among large groups of infants. Neither practice supports relationships. Not uncommon practitioner comments such as, "Don't let Ms. Duo (the former teacher) visit because she upsets him (graduated child)" and, pertaining to a newly admitted child, "Just let her cry; she has to learn she can't do that here," belie a lack of awareness of the importance of relationships to infants.

An additional perspective is provided by Lally (1994), who suggests that relationships for infants are further undermined by cultural discontinuities. Consider the barriers and, thereby, the developmental inappropriateness for a baby in attaching to and receiving life's earliest lessons through a relationship with a teacher who speaks a language other than the child's home language, who provides caregiving in ways that are at variance with those of the infant's parents, or who is unable to honor the parents' childrearing wisdom or work together to reinforce each other.

Further, training and research that emphasize the nature of the interaction stream, however positive, that don't also conceptually embed the interactions in relationships fall short of recommending the most developmentally appropriate approaches. Fortunately, recent training approaches emphasizing attachment concepts (Lally 1991; Lally, Torres, & Phelps 1994), conceptualizations that embed recommended play interactions in relationships (Hughes, Elicker, & Veen 1995), and recent child care research (Howes & Hamilton 1992; Hestenes, Kontos, & Bryan 1993), all conceptualize the teacher-child relationship as a framework for the interaction stream in child care.

2. An attachment approach can inform infant program development.

Often, the list of desirable quality features in child care gets long and confusing so that quality may seem elusive. However, focusing first on relationships establishes a quality benchmark and other pieces tend to fall into place. Indicators of infant care quality can be organized using the infant-teacher relationship as mediator (Howes & Hamilton 1992) between program features and child outcomes. For example, adults are unlikely to foster secure relationships with children in the absence of desirable interactions, small groups, reasonable ratios, and responsive care. The attachment approach can help directors focus on quality by asking a simple question, "Does every child in my program have a secure attachment relationship with his or her teacher?"

While it would be unproductive to label individual children in an infant care setting as "insecure" or "secure," secure attachment is a desirable goal for all children. We can identify and encourage the positive features that define a secure relationship between teacher and child and also examine the ability of the system as a whole to support relationships.

3. Attachment concepts address the teacher turnover problem.

The attachment approach will not work with high levels of turnover, but it may help to solve the problem. In our experience, when appropriately selected teachers understand their importance as teachers and are given the opportunity to fully develop their relationships with children, they are reluctant to leave midstream during the infant-toddler years.

4. Attachment concepts provide a framework for problem solving.

The attachment perspective provides a window of understanding for many dynamics in the infant care setting. For example, it underscores precisely *why* turnover is harmful. Attachment concepts may change the approach to child behaviors as well. If a child is noncooperative or shows aggression with peers, the attachment paradigm suggests reviewing the infant-teacher relationship or even the infant-parent relationship versus simply focusing on changing the child's behaviors.

5. The attachment approach offers a vision for infant care.

Attachment concepts suggest a vision of a secure infant-teacher attachment for every child in care. In the context of this article, failure to achieve the vision would be to find large numbers nationwide of infants and toddlers in care settings who have insecure attachments with teachers.

Individualized stimulation builds attachments and enhances infant/toddler development.

In fact, such is the case in the United States today. The few studies available show that secure infant-teacher attachment rates among infants who have been with their teachers in centers for less than a year range from 55% (Goossens & Van IJzendoorn 1990) to 66% (Howes, Rodning, Galluzzo, & Myers 1988). In family day care homes, Galinsky, Howes, Kontos, and Shinn (1994) reported that 50% of the children had insecure attachments with their providers. Thus, with one-third to one-half of infants in infant care not experiencing security with teachers, there is considerable work to be done.

Across the United States today, some programs such as The Gallup Organization Child Development Center (and there are others), some infant care educators, and particular research paradigms are making apparent the ways to apply attachment concepts in infant care. Our experience, as noted by requests for information and responses to NAEYC presentations, tells us that many more program directors, teachers, and parents would like to more fully incorporate attachment-related, relationship underpinnings into program practices. With greater application of a focused relationship-based approach to infant care, it is likely that the prevalence of secure beginnings for babies and toddlers in infant care in the country can increase.

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Editor's note: **Watch for reader responses to infant caregiver Dottie Derman's dilemma in the September issue of *Young Children*. (If you haven't read it, it's in "Using NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct," page 56, May 1996.)**