


What is attachment?

An attachment bond refers to a relationship between a child or young person and their primary caregiver that is formed in the early years and is thought to have a long-term impact on development and growth.



A secure attachment helps children and young people feel safe at times of need. When caregivers are not able to provide sensitive, consistent and loving care, a child or young person may develop an insecure attachment to them. This early insecurity can affect their ability to learn and to form relationships with other adults and with peers.

What can school staff do to support secure attachment in children and young people?

- 1.** **Undertake training** in attachment theory to help you respond to children and young people's needs. Children and young people with insecure attachment tend to underachieve at school, find it difficult to manage their emotions, and may be less willing to take on challenges.
- 2.** **Identify** children and young people with greater attachment needs. They may be unfocussed, disruptive, controlling, withdrawn or destructive. Often these challenging behaviours are their ways of coping and protecting themselves.
- 3.** **Talk** to your pupils about how they are feeling. Children and young people are often very aware of their own feelings but may not be able to express them.
- 4.** **Engage** with other adults who are involved in the child or young person's life, whether that's a parent or carer, grandparent, social worker or other professional.
- 5.** **Help build** children and young people's capacity for self-regulation, resilience and confidence. This could be through play, art, physical exercise and friendship building, as well as through classroom learning.
- 6.** **Value your input** as a significant adult in the child or young person's life, with the potential to be a safe haven and secure base for them.