

Supporting Attachment in schools

For what age?	At what level?
All Key Stages	All levels

Why attachment matters?

Children are not slates from which the past can be rubbed.... but human beings who carry their previous experiences with them and whose behaviour in the present is profoundly affected by what has gone on before. (Bowlby, 1951).

The nature of a child's primary attachments to caregivers lay the foundations for socio-emotional well-being and therefore children's capacity to learn.

Educators themselves need to establish an attachment-like relationship with their pupils, particularly with challenging and vulnerable pupils, in order to enhance learning opportunities for all.

How can schools help?

School staff can support children with attachment needs by:

- Understanding what attachment is and why it is so important.
- Knowing how to support when attachment style impacts on learning.

How does supporting attachment help children?

Teachers and other significant adults in a child's life can provide important attachments for children:

- Positive associations are found between quality of practitioner- child relationships and achievement
- High quality practitioner-child relationships help buffer children from the negative effects of insecure attachment on achievement
- Emotional resilience and the ability to learn are inextricably linked
- Secure attachment relationships correlate strongly with higher academic attainment, better self-regulation and social competence. (Commodari 2013, Geddes 2006)

What happens to children who develop an insecure attachment pattern?

Research suggests that an insecure pattern established early in life can have a negative impact on emotional wellbeing and relationships in childhood, and throughout adult life.

How do we know it works?

Researchers have found that attachment patterns established early in life can lead to a number of outcomes. For example, children who are securely attached as infants tend to develop stronger self-esteem and better self-reliance as they grow older. These children also tend to be more independent, perform better in school, have successful social relationships, and experience less depression and anxiety.

How can I access training?

To access centralised training in Attachment, including at the TaMHS Conference if appropriate, please visit:

- [LGSS I Learn booking website](#)

Training at your school, or within clusters, for your staff can be commissioned from the Educational Psychology Service by contacting the TaMHS Administrator:

tamhs@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk or by speaking to your Link Educational Psychologist

Useful resources

- Commodari, E. (2013) Preschool teacher attachment, school readiness and risk of learning difficulties. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 28 (2013) 123– 133.
- Geddes, H. (2006) *Attachment in the Classroom: the links between children's early experience, emotional wellbeing and performance in school*. London: Worth Publishing.