

# Early Childhood Theorists by Aaron and Debbie – Part 5

## Bowlby

Contemporary Theorists

Links to Bowlby and Attachment

By Aaron Bradbury & Debbie Garvey



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**JOHN BOWLBY**  
(1907-1990)

-  British Child Psychiatrist & Psychoanalyst.
-  He was the first attachment theorist, describing attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings".
-  Bowlby believed that the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life.
-  According to Bowlby, attachment also serves to keep the infant close to the mother, thus improving the child's chances of survival.

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**WHAT IS ATTACHMENT?**

- Attachment is a strong, affectionate tie we have with special people in our lives that lead us to experience pleasure when we interact with... and to be comforted by nearness in times of stress. (Berk, 2015)
- According to psychoanalytic perspective and behaviouristic perspective feeding was seen as a central context in which the caregiver and babies developed attachment.



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**Schaffer & Emerson (1964)**

Conducted an observational study of 60 children in Glasgow, Scotland, to understand how babies form and develop attachments.

They note that human infants take a significantly longer time to form a bond than new-born animals, such as ducks.  
Human infants' attachments develop in four stages:

- 1) The Asocial Stage - usually lasts up to six weeks after birth. New-borns don't tend to discriminate between humans but do demonstrate a preference for humans over non-humans.
- 2) The Indiscriminate Stage - from six weeks to six months. Babies can tell people apart, so start to develop a stronger attachment with familiar adults. Babies don't yet show an aversion to strangers.
- 3) Specific Attachment - from seven months. Infants demonstrate separation anxiety when separated from their primary attachment (usually a parent). Babies also begin to demonstrate a fear of strangers at this stage.
- 4) Multiple Attachments - finally, from around 10 months babies demonstrate a significantly increased interest in friends, grandparents and other familiar adults.

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Schaffer & Emerson (1964)

Four Stages of Attachment: Learning to Connect

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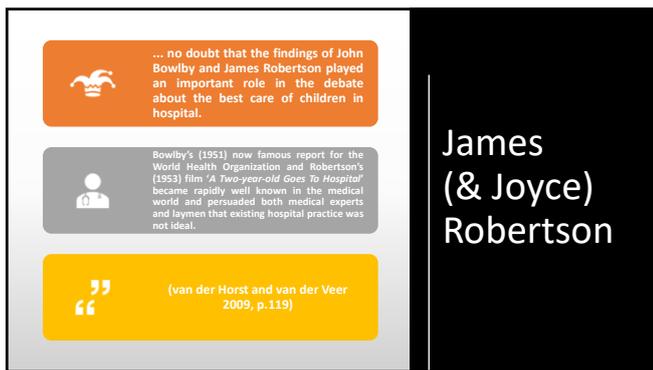
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... no doubt that the findings of John Bowlby and James Robertson played an important role in the debate about the best care of children in hospital.

Bowlby's (1951) now famous report for the World Health Organization and Robertson's (1953) film 'A Two-year-old Goes To Hospital' became rapidly well known in the medical world and persuaded both medical experts and laymen that existing hospital practice was not ideal.

James (& Joyce) Robertson

(van der Horst and van der Veer 2009, p.119)

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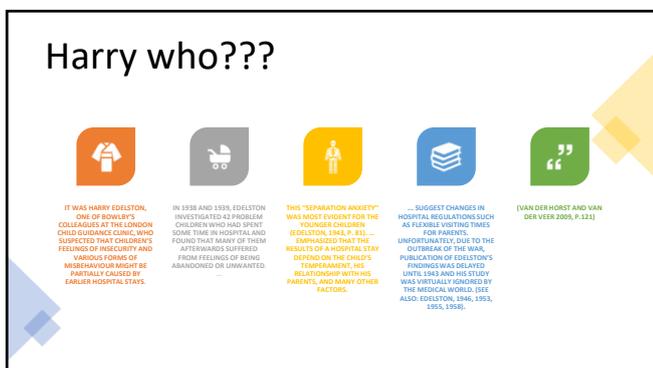
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### Harry who???

IT WAS HARRY EDELSTON, ONE OF BOWLBY'S COLLEAGUES AT THE LONDON CHILD GUIDANCE CLINIC WHO SUSPECTED THAT CHILDREN'S FEELINGS OF INSECURITY AND VARIOUS FORMS OF MISBEHAVIOUR MIGHT BE PARTIALLY CAUSED BY EARLIER HOSPITAL STAYS.

IN 1938 AND 1939, EDELSTON INVESTIGATED 42 PROBLEMS CHILDREN WHO HAD SPENT SOME TIME IN HOSPITAL AND FOUND THAT MANY OF THEM AFTERWARDS SUFFERED FROM FEELINGS OF BEING ABANDONED OR UNWANTED.

THIS "SEPARATION ANXIETY" WAS MOST PROMINENT FOR THE YOUNGER CHILDREN (EDELSTON, 1943, P. 111). HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE RESULTS OF A HOSPITAL STAY DEPEND ON THE CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT, HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PARENTS, AND MANY OTHER FACTORS.

... SUGGEST CHANGES IN HOSPITAL REGULATIONS SUCH AS FLEXIBLE VISITING TIMES FOR PARENTS. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR, PUBLICATION OF EDELSTON'S FINDINGS WAS DELAYED UNTIL 1943 AND HIS STUDY WAS VIRTUALLY IGNORED BY THE MEDICAL WORLD. (SEE ALSO: EDELSTON, 1946, 1953, 1955, 1958).

(VAN DER HORST AND VAN DER VEER 2009, P.121)

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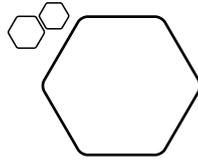
## Bowlby

### Rickman

In raising concern regarding evacuation of children:

*“... at a time when his need for security, and the comforting assurance of familiar faces, is great, his removal from his parents will tax him severely... may show in unsatisfactory or unhappy social relationships later in life”.*

(Rickman 1939, p. 1192)




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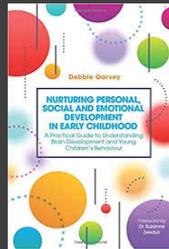
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### Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

*‘... like children, parents have personal, social and emotional development (PSED) needs and that childcare staff are as responsible for thinking about those as they are the needs of children.*

*Essentially... when viewed through the lens of relationships, a book about children is never just about children. It is always ultimately about human beings.’*

(Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, Foreword: p. 13)




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### Connected Baby & Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk

Every time you start your day, you draw on the emotional attachment processes your brain built as a baby... Attachment is receiving renewed interest from a wide range of sectors: scientists, medical staff, educational bodies, governmental agencies, lawyer and economists, for a start... I think its value becomes clearer when we understand that attachment processes operate in all our lives, throughout every day, and often in ways of which we have absolutely no awareness. Understanding even some of the science of attachment helps us to become reflective, compassionate, and creative, as individuals and as a society.

<http://www.suzannezeedyk.com/downloads/>




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### Dr. Jools Page

'Professional Love' provides practitioners with the language to appropriately describe the close, loving, intimate and affectionate bond which, over time, is inevitably developed with the children in their care in the context of reciprocity (meaning with mutual agreement) and shared understanding.

(Dr. Jools Page 2015, p.15)



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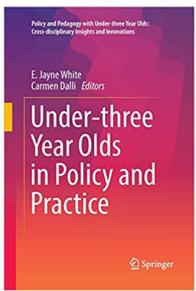
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### Dr. Jools Page

Early years professionals should be taught... How to act with professional love and that this is an important part of their work. All those no touch etc. policies are greatly contra productive in the first instance to the child and secondly for the professionals.

(Page 2016, p.138)



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### Prof. Francis McGlone

*'Touch isn't just good – it's absolutely essential.'*

*'Denying it is like denying a child oxygen. I get very exercised [angry] about the demonization of touch. It is cruel, in my mind. It's another form of abuse.'*

The scientific evidence is incontrovertible. I'm not just talking psychobonsense; I'm talking about proper, evidenced, neuroscience.

(Blume, 2017)



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### Prof. Christine Pascal OBE & Prof. Tony Bertram

#### High Achieving White Working Class (HAWWC) boys project

*'Socio-Emotional Characteristics: The boys have a capacity to make strong and loving attachments to their close family, to make and sustain friendships with their peers and others, to be affectionate, loving, empathetic to others and to 'lead' interactions are characteristics associated with high achieving young boys. Although tantrums and frustrations may appear, they are quickly overcome.'*

(Pascal & Bertram 2016, p.15)



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### High Achieving White Working Class (HAWWC) boys project

#### Positive and Close Relationship with Key Worker:

*... Where the key worker had developed a strong and lasting relationship with both the parent and child, prior to and during attendance, and tailored their support individually, the benefit to both child and parent was clear. Knowing the child and parent well is paramount.*

(Pascal & Bertram 2016, p.20)

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### Peter Elfer

*A final strand that is an important part of this third area of work, is the development of forms of supervision and work discussion that include attention to emotional experience at work. Finally, recent development of early years policy has made it a statutory requirement that all early years staff should have regular opportunity for professional reflection on their interactions with children and families (DfE 2012).*

(Elfer 2015, p.507)



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### Dr. Jack Shonkoff

About the time that infants begin to form specific attachments to adults, the presence of caregivers who are warm and responsive begins to buffer or prevent elevations in stress hormones, even in situations that elicit behavioral indicators of distress in the infant

(Shonkoff & Phillips 2000, p.237)

Shonkoff, J.P. and Phillips, D.A. (eds) (2000) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.




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Scientific research points to the presence of a stable, caring adult in a child's life as the key to building the skills of resilience.

### Dr. Jack Shonkoff

Redford, J. (Director), & Redford, J., & Pritzker, K. (Producers). (2016). *Resilience: The biology of stress and the science of hope* [Motion picture on DVD]. United States: KPR Films LLC.

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- van der Horst, F.C.P. and van der Veer, R. (2009) 'Changing attitudes towards the care of children in hospital: a new assessment of the influence of the work of Bowlby and Robertson in the UK, 1940–1970.' *Attachment & Human Development*, 11, (2), pp. 119–142.
- Dr.Suzanne Zeedyk & Connected Baby: <https://connectedbaby.net/> <http://www.suzannezeedyk.com/>

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## Bowlby

A presentation brought to you by

**Aaron Bradbury**  
Principal Lecturer Early Childhood

**Debbie Garvey**  
Author and Early Years Expert

**EY Matters**  
Changing the Script for Early Childhood Practice



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