Today’s piece was prepared by Taylor Huntington, MD and is based on a NY Times article titled [Why a Baby’s Connection with a Parent Matters](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/well/family/why-a-babys-connection-with-a-parent-matters.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fhealth)

This article discusses attachment theory or how children’s response to stressful and strange situations is reflective of their attachment to their caregiver. They describe responses categorized as secure attachment, insecure attachment (insecure- avoidant type, insecure resistant type) and disorganized. For a child to feel securely attached, the article explains, the child needs to feel that the parent is reliable and responsive to their needs. Dr. Klass discusses that these young behaviors are highly predictive of the child’s future self-confidence, independence, language competence, problem-solving ability and ability to form relationships. She explains these are valuable to assess in young children but are very plastic.

This article cites several papers and a book on attachment theory as well as relies heavily on expert option. It is well sourced for a difficult topic. It does not give evidence to the level of correlation to attachment and behavior, which can be rather low in some categories. The news article does note that attachment is plastic in early development but fails to note that it remains plastic throughout adolescence and into adulthood; thus these early predictors are only a small part of what affects the child’s future behavior. Both the article and the literature are vague on the practical implications of this topic; however, the literature has progressed since the article summarized and this was excluded from the text. It is written for physicians and highly educated families. This article would be very difficult for the general population to read. The article gave actionable items for physicians reading the article but it would likely be much harder to find actionable items for the general population. One point especially helpful in the article was assessing attachment after a stressful intervention like a physical exam could give insight on whether more thorough evaluation of home life and social support is indicated.

**RESOURECES ON PARENTING AND ATTACHMENT:**

[The Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/individuals-and-society/social-behavior/v/secure-and-insecure-attachment) *Video: Secure and Insecure Attachment; Describes the family Ainsworth-Strange Situation*

[Parenting Skills Support](https://depts.washington.edu/dbpeds/Resources.html#section4_textarea17_heading) *Links to multiple cost-free, positive-parenting resources*

**References:**

* Biobehavioral Organization in Securely and Insecurely Attached Infants. G. Spangler and K. E. Grossmann. Child development. Vol 64, No 5. October 1993 pp. 1439-1450.
* Attachment Security in Infancy and Early Adulthood: A Twenty-Year Longitudinal Study. E. Waters, S. Merrick, D. Treboux, J. Crowell, L. Albersheim. Vol 71. No. 3. May, 2000. 683-689.
* The Significance of Insecure Attachment and Disorganization in the Development of Children’s Externalizing Behavior: A meta-Analytic Study. Child Development. R.P. Rearon, M. J. Bakermans-Kranenbrg, M.H. Van Ijzendoorn, A. Lapsley, G.I. Roisman. Vol 81. No. 2. March 2010. 435 – 456.

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!