

Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography

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Leaving Tears Behind at Child care Drop-offs

Adults (parents and educators) involved in child care drop-offs can relate to the importance of secure, and insecure attachment and the separation process. Mardell (1992) stated that attachment plays a critical role in children's lives and that attachment lends itself to children's discomfort, moods, and behaviours. In defining attachment, Ainsworth (1967) noted that the child who is securely attached to his mother does not seek constant proximity or attention and happily moves away as long as he knows his mother is accessible. Ainsworth defined attachment styles further based on the state and quality of attachment: secure and insecure attachment. While secure attachment connotes feeling safe and secure, insecure attachment is disorganized, and confusing which raises feelings of avoidance, resistance and, at the same time, the need for love.

As an early childhood educator who probes the ways to make drop-offs easier for families and goodbyes smoother for children, I have chosen the following articles to dig in more about child care drop-offs and young children's secure attachment development with parents and educators.

Cárcamo, R. A., Vermeer, H. J., van der Veer, R., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2016). Early full-time day care, mother-child attachment, and quality of the home environment in Chile: Preliminary findings. *Early Education and Development*, 27(4), 457-477.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1091971>

This research consisted of two longitudinal studies that looked at the effects of full-time child care, examining two Chilean sample groups in 19 public child care centers and three public health centers in low-income Mapuche and non-Mapuche families. For the Magellan-Leiden Childcare Study (MLCS), 95 mothers with children younger than one-year-old participated. Then the researchers cross-validated the results of the first study with a large sample (10,723 mother-child). In both studies, the researchers measured the quality of care for children provided at home. Additionally, the MLCS

study measured the mother-child relationship. The study's findings supported the idea that child care does not negatively affect mother-child relationships, attachment and children. Conversely, children who attend child care have better social skills, provided that well-trained early childhood educators (ECEs) work at child care centres and parents have acquired good parenting skills.

I found the research instruments unbiased, thus, valid and reliable. The study helped me recognize that children's secure attachment development towards parents will happen regardless of the duration of time (long or short) children spend in child care.

Dalli, C. (1999). *Starting childcare: What young children learn about relating to adults in the first weeks of settling into a childcare centre*. Institute for Early Childhood Studies. [Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington].

This phenomenological research investigated three children's experiences, who were new to child care, and their parents' and educators' insights. The study looked through multiple perspectives (co-constructionist, attachment theory, temperament theory) in order to understand children's feelings. Data collection was through notes and interviews with mothers and educators. Three thematic stories (coming to terms with separation, who looks after me here, and latching on to an educator) emerged from data collection. Interestingly, the findings confirmed the positive influence of child care on children's relationships with other children and educators. Besides, the critical role educators play as the absent parents' alternative in new children's settlement was confirmed.

This paper proves particularly useful for my topic as a practical framework that supports the development of secure attachment in children attending child care. The limitation of this case study might be its generalizability due to the limited number of participants.

Ebbeck, M. & Yim, H. Y. B. (2009) Rethinking attachment: fostering positive relationships between infants, toddlers and their primary caregivers, *Early Child Development and Care*, 179:7, 899-909, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430701567934>

This small scale qualitative study investigated the importance of attachment between children, child care providers and the quality of drop-offs. Three full-time female primary caregivers (ECEs) and ten mothers participated. The research findings showed that all the participants favoured the educators positively impacting children's well-being and secure attachment. Gradual entry was a necessity, according to all parents. According to ECEs, being responsive to the children was the main fostering factor in having a positive relationship and developing attachment. Educators also mentioned another important factor: bonding with parents through verbal, written, and visual communication. Besides, staff believed in the continuity of care from home to child care and the availability of a comforting object to build a secure attachment.

The findings align with Jovanovic's (2011) article (cited below). Both researchers concluded that positive interactions with adults (parents and educators) help children have an easier transition to child care. This study was a reminder of the importance of ECEs' bonding with children, the critical aspect might be forgotten over time.

Jovanovic, J. (2011). Saying goodbye: An investigation into parent-infant separation behaviours on arrival in childcare. *Child care in practice : northern Ireland journal of multi-disciplinary. child care practice*, 17(3), 247-269.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2011.571237>

This quantitative study aimed to understand how parental separation behaviours impact children's transitional behaviours. It consisted of structured observations and records of physical, verbal, and non-verbal interactions of 30 parent-infant (6-18 months) pairs' separation process and/or educators at three community-based Australian centres.

Interestingly throughout the study, parents concentrated more on routine tasks, communicated more frequently with educators and rarely spoke with their children about their return to the centre. The findings confirmed children were less frequently moved around (n=20) and most likely watched surrounding (n=28) with other behaviours in between, such as going to educators (n=18), exploring around (n=10), and vocalizing and smiling (n=4). Lastly, the observations of parent and infant-centred behaviours revealed that the separation is dyadic in nature, meaning parents and children could affect each other during separation. This mutual relationship consequently shapes the children's settlement in the child care setting and supports the children's secure attachments towards the educators.

In evaluating this article, its dominant narrative stood out to me since the parent-child relationship is one of the most critical factors in determining drop-off quality. As a reflection, however, I found some of the findings contrasting the reality which guided me to observe the separation process of children and their parents more closely in the future. For instance, parents give their attention to both their children and educators upon arrival which supports the child's secure attachment to the environment, the parents and the educators.

Klein, P. S., Kraft, R. R., & Shohet, C. (2010). Behaviour patterns in daily mother-child separations: possible opportunities for stress reduction. *Early Child Development and Care*, 180(3), 387–396.

24 parent-infant Israelis (12 boys and 12 girls, between 6-18 months who were new to childcare) participated in this two-stage, small-scale research, investigating the actual separation process daily upon drop-offs for three months (Sep-Nov). The first stage was the video recording, and the second one was observing children during the process of separation. The findings showed that most (85%) of all interactions followed the regular

pattern of activities. In such cases, the separation process was more associated with a more calm and secure separation episode. Besides, although in the beginning, the separation was very stressful for parents and children, after a while, parents, children and educators could come to a consistent routine to make the separation easier due to developing a better relationship and building trust and attachment between child-parent and educators.

The findings of this research align well with my experience greeting families over the pick-ups for years. I found the ethics of the study comprehensive. However, recording in child care might put both parents and the children under extra pressure. The article helped me to realize the value and importance of parents' interactions with ECEs and their children to ease the drop-off stress.

References

- Ainsworth, M., Blehar, M., Waters E. & Wall, S. (2014). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. New York. Routledge.
- Mardell, B. (1992). A Practitioner's Perspective on the Implications of Attachment Theory for Daycare Professionals. *Child Study Journal*, 22(3), 201–228.