

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Introduction



Imagine you are at a family reunion and your cousin and his wife arrive with their son, Jack. Your Uncle Hal, eager to hold the little boy, comes up to your cousin and takes the baby away from his father. Immediately, Jack begins to yell and cry loudly.

Infants prefer being held or being with someone, as opposed to being alone. It does not matter who is holding the infant, until the infant is about four months old. This is when infants begin to develop an attachment, or emotional bond to their caregivers. Attachment strengthens as babies reach six or seven months. In this scenario, Jack had a normal negative reaction to a stranger. This is actually an emotional milestone called stranger anxiety, which develops between eight and fifteen months.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Separation Anxiety



- ❑ Stranger anxiety and separation anxiety develop around the same time.
- ❑ Separation anxiety causes infants to cry or act distraught when their caregivers leave them.

Separation Anxiety

Around the same time that infants experience stranger anxiety, they also develop separation anxiety. This type of anxiety leads infants to cry or act distraught when their caregivers leave them.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Experiment Introduction



- ❑ Sometimes the best way to figure out why humans act a certain way to explore animal behaviors.
- ❑ You will mimic a couple research studies done with animals in an attempt to understand why humans develop attachment.

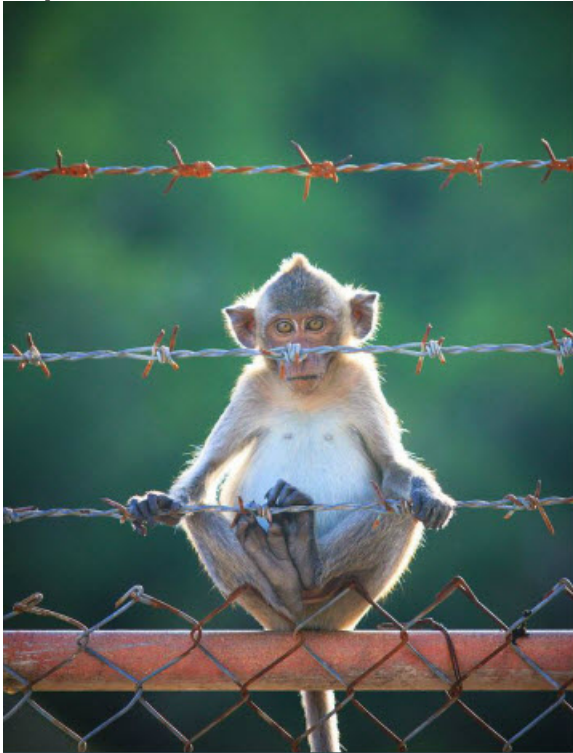
Sometimes the best avenue for figuring out why humans act certain ways is to first explore animal behaviors and then make comparisons.

You have the opportunity to mimic a couple research studies done with animals in an attempt to better understand why humans develop attachment.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Experiment



- This infant monkey is all alone, and suffering from separation anxiety.
- What do you think will soothe the monkey more?



Click and drag each item over the monkey

To your left, you have an infant monkey in a cage. He is all alone, and suffering from separation anxiety. Your job is to figure out what will soothe the monkey.

What do you think will soothe the monkey more: a bottle with food or a soft cloth? Begin the experiment by dragging the bottle and the cloth over the monkey's cage.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Bottle



Although a bottle would provide the monkey with food, food does not offer the comfort the monkey seeks due to separation anxiety.



Click and drag each item over the monkey

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Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Soft Cloth



A soft cloth does not provide food, but the monkey will cling to it and feel distraught if it is taken away. The monkey's separation anxiety is lowered by touching something soft.



Click and drag each item over the monkey

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Module 5: Life Span Development

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Harry F. Harlow



- ❑ This experiment was based on the research of Harry F. Harlow in 1959.
- ❑ He found that monkeys needed to be touched by something soft.
- ❑ This is similar to a human child wanting to be touched by his or her mother's skin.
- ❑ This urge proved greater than the need for food.

Comfort Contact

This experiment was based on research done by the psychologist, Harry F. Harlow in 1959. Harlow used monkeys as subjects to better understand separation anxiety. He found that monkeys needed comfort contact, which is basically the desire to feel or be touched by something soft. Think about how a young monkey wants to be touched his or her mother's fur, or how a human child wants to be touched by his or her mother's skin. This urge proved even greater than the need for food.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Secure Attachment



Loving caregivers typically have securely attached infants.

Securely attached infants usually have successful relationships with peers, behave well, and do well in school.

When babies become attached, it means that they know their needs will be met and that they can trust their caregiver. Loving and devoted caregivers typically have securely attached infants. Although securely attached children get upset when their caregivers leave, they become content again when their caregivers return. Securely attached infants usually remain secure into childhood. For example, they typically have successful relationships with peers, behave well, and do well in school.

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 2 Content: Social & Emotional Development - Infancy to Childhood

Insecure Attachment



Insecure Attachment

Undependable caregivers typically have insecurely attached infants.

Insecurely attached infants usually act less happy, are more likely to misbehave, and not more likely to excel in school.

Babies tend to become insecurely attached when caregivers do not respond to them or are undependable. Generally, an insecurely attached infant is fine when caregivers are not around, and does not try to connect with caregivers when they return.

Once an insecurely attached infant reaches childhood, he or she usually acts less happy and less cooperative than a securely attached infant. Insecurely attached infants are also more likely to misbehave and not excel as much in school.