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From Infant Attachment Security to Mother-Child Emotion Dialogues: Understanding Emotion Communication in the Early Years

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RESULTS

Association Between Attachment in Infancy and Emotion Dialogue Classification at 3.5 years:

Preliminary analyses of 20 dyads using a logistic regression revealed that attachment security at 12 months was a significant predictor of 3.5 year mother-child emotion dialogue classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Classifications</th>
<th>AEED</th>
<th>EM</th>
<th>Non-EM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Secure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AEED = Autobiographical Emotional Events Dialogue; EM = Emotionally Matched; Non-EM = non-Emotionally matched.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of Attachment in Infancy and AEED Classifications at 3.5

Results of the study corroborate John Bowlby’s theorizing that communication and secure base patterns extend well beyond infancy and into the verbal stages of development.

Our findings show that attachment security undergoes a significant transformation from early mother-infant non-verbal interactions to later verbal emotional communications. Children as young as 3.5 years of age engaged in discussions about past emotional experiences, and that the manner in which these events are discussed, organized, and interpreted is a function of their earlier socio-emotional relationship.

The study demonstrates that the secure base provided by the mother and experienced by her child in infancy, as seen with children in secure attachment relationships, extends into the domain of open mother-child conversation and joint affective meaning-making during the years to follow.

A copy of this poster may be found at: http://works.bepress.com/gregmoran/