

# Attachment In Parenting

## Attachment Styles

Secure

### Secure Attachment

The child:

Can use the attachment figure as a secure base, from which to explore the world, and from which they have their feelings regulated.

Parent

Autonomous – regulates themselves and their child.  
Consistently responsive.

**The adult**

Feels comfortable with distance from loved ones, yet uses them for emotional support and can be vulnerable. Appropriate boundaries – not too close or too far with others.

Insecure

### Anxious Attachment

The child:

Struggles to calm their feelings completely when reconnected with the attachment figure; is more **sensitive** to feelings of abandonment. Struggles to explore fully as attention is half on where the parent is. Strong displays of emotion as an attempt to gain parent's attention, closeness, and regulation.

Parent

Preoccupied – concerned with other people and things.  
Inconsistently responsive.

**The adult – can 'feel' but not 'deal'.**

Social and emotional.  
Lively and vivid, yet sometimes overwhelmed by their feelings, and focused on avoiding distance from and ruptures from others. Self-doubting, fearful of being too independent.

### Avoidant Attachment

The child:

Struggles to have their feelings regulated having distanced and **withdrawn** themselves from the attachment figure. Still have desire to connect and be regulated, but have learnt not to 'act up' in showing emotions they need regulated.

Parent

Dismissing – Doesn't have time for emotions, can't tolerate emotions of child.  
Consistently unresponsive.

**The adult – can 'deal' but not 'feel'.**

Logical.  
Less issues with self-esteem and autonomy, and are reluctant to rely on others, and to trust others. Keep feelings remote, not wanting to have to rely on others' emotional help.

### Disorganised Attachment

The child:

Struggles to regulate their feelings due to **inconsistent** ways of interacting with attachment figures. Could display mixture of other three styles. Trauma and abuse can impact reasoning.

Parent

Unresolved – may struggle with extremes of mental health issues.  
Frightening, or frightened.  
The destination for comfort yet also the source of discomfort.

**The adult**

Having unresolved past trauma which affects reasoning and mental functioning in the present, e.g. dissociation.