

## CREATING A SECURE BOND

Spending quality time with your child is precious! These moments of connection increase the joy of being together and your enjoyment of parenthood. By sharing these moments, you're showing your child that they're important to you and promoting the development of their brain as well as their social and emotional skills.

## Moments of connection that make all the difference

Here are a few ideas for strengthening your bond on a daily basis:

- Read stories together: creates a moment of sharing and closeness
- Sing songs: promotes bonding and enjoyment
- Play together: encourages co-operation and builds your bond
- Talk to your child and listen carefully to what they tell you: allows you to discover their interests and their world
- Share a moment without distractions (e.g., screens): shows them that they're important to you
- Establish a stable and predictable routine: provides guidance and a sense of security



## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF SO YOU CAN TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR CHILD

Being a parent requires a lot of energy and attention. It's essential to take care of yourself in order to be emotionally available for your child. It's like being on a plane: you have to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others!

When you feel exhausted, overwhelmed, anxious or angry, here are some things you can do to help you regain your calm and balance:

- Listen** to soothing or energizing music, depending on your needs.
- Go outdoors** for some fresh air, even if only for a few minutes, to walk and take deep breaths.
- Do** an activity that relaxes you and takes your mind off things (colouring, knitting, gardening, reading, watching a movie, etc.).
- Talk** to someone you trust.
- Ask** a loved one for a break when possible.
- Write down** how you feel to put your emotions into words and gain some perspective.
- Seek** support from organizations in your area which offer resources and networking opportunities for parents.

This document was written by **Vanessa Lecompte** and **Marie-Pierre Joly** of the Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté (IUJD) of the CCSMTL in collaboration with **Chantal Cyr**, professor at UQAM and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Child Attachment and Development, and **Michèle Robitaille** of the IUJD, June 2025.



## Attachment relationship

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN DEVELOPING A SECURE ATTACHMENT WITH YOU



## What is attachment?

From the very first months of life, your child naturally turns to you for comfort, security and the fulfillment of their needs, whether physical (such as eating) or emotional (such as being comforted).

Little by little, through these daily interactions, they develop a special bond with you.

The quality of this bond depends in particular on how you respond to their needs. This is known as parental sensitivity.

## What is parental sensitivity?

It's your way of perceiving, understanding and responding to your child's needs appropriately, consistently and within a reasonable time frame. This helps your child feel seen, important, understood, safe and loved.

For example, if your child is afraid of a situation and you take the time to listen to them, understand their point of view and reassure them, you're showing sensitivity. They learn that they can count on you when they need comfort.



## Secure attachment: A bond of trust for exploring the world and learning about oneself

When you respond sensitively to your child's needs, they feel that it's safe to explore. They become open to learning about themselves and their surroundings. They develop confidence in your availability and in their own ability to overcome challenges.

### A child whose attachment is secure tends to:

- ✓ Turn to you and seek your comfort when they're upset, worried or angry, then return to play once they're calm.
- ✓ Discover new games (such as climbing a ladder at the park) under your watchful eye and encouragement, and ask you for help when needed.
- ✓ Want to be comforted after a nightmare or moment of fear, then calms down.

## YOU ARE THEIR ANCHOR!

## WHEN PARENTAL SENSITIVITY IS MORE DIFFICULT

**It's normal for some of your child's behaviour or emotions to leave you feeling worried, helpless or even angry. It happens to every parent!**

Your personal experiences and well-being influence your sensitivity and reactions toward your child.

### Your own history

The way your parents and other important adults in your childhood managed their emotions and responded to your needs influences your sensitivity toward your child and how you react to their emotions.

### Life's trials and tribulations

Significant events in your life can affect your psychological well-being and make you less emotionally available to your child.

### Everyday stress

Challenges such as a lack of support from those around you and financial difficulties can make parenting more stressful and interfere with your ability to respond sensitively, calmly and attentively to your child's needs.

### THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A PERFECT PARENT!

In difficult times, what matters is what you do to repair the bond with your child: apologizing, talking to them and showing that you're there for them.

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO DO THIS.**