

Infant-Parent/Caregiver Relationship Assessment

How to develop observational skills to assess
babies and infant-parent interaction

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Crowell Relationship Assessment

- Developed by Judith Crowell to assess how mothers' models of attachment were reflected in their interaction with their children.
- Research based model modified for clinical use and assessment

Crowell Procedure

- 8-10 Minutes of Free Play
- Clean-up
- Bubble Play
- Structured Graduated Tasks (3-4)
- Separation
- Reunion

Two aspects of maternal
behavior were observed to be
particularly important in
influencing attachment
behavior and separation
responses

Maternal Behaviors

- Parental responsiveness
- Anticipation and preparation of the child for the separation

How to set up an assessment

- Free play
- Clean-up
- Interaction Tasks
 - Bubbles
 - Easy structured task
 - Slightly more difficult task
 - More difficult structured task
- Separation
- Reunion

Setting up Playroom

- Room preferably with one way mirror or glass with curtain
- A limited number of toys in room – bring free play toys in room and remove after clean-up & before doing structured tasks
- Cabinet that can lock to store tasks
- Remove bubbles during separation

Directions for Administration

- Have child wait outside the room while clinicians goes over instructions
- Communicate with the parent to let them know how to start the next task
- May need help from another person to administer

Administration of Assessment

- Free play toys should include items to encourage cooperative play, i.e. telephones, animals, doll house with people, play food, etc. (see list of free play toys for different ages)
- No other toy items or soothing objects should be in the room during assessment

How to understand and make sense of relationship assessment - Goals

- Observing the infant/young child with parent/caregiver and understanding the relationship
- Focus on parent/caregiver through study of infant behaviors and affect

Observing the Relationship

(See Clinical Rating of Interaction Scale, Ososky & Kronenberg, 2008)

- Behaviors to look for:
 - Steady and happy
 - Aggressive
 - Withdrawn
 - Emotional expressions
 - Behavior regulation
 - Temperament or style, etc

Observing the relationship

- Behaviors to look for:
 - Ways of interacting with caregiver
 - Referencing (looking toward) caregiver
 - Cooperating with caregiver
 - Noncompliance
 - Anger, temper tantrums
 - Persistence

Parent behaviors and affect

- Positive affect
- Withdrawn/depressed
- Irritability/anger
- Intrusiveness
- Behavioral responsiveness
- Emotional responsiveness

Child behaviors and affect

- Positive affect
- Withdrawn/depressed
- Irritability/anger
- Noncompliance toward parent
- Aggression toward parent
- Enthusiasm
- Persistence with task

What to Look For

- Free Play: Level of comfort
 - Sharing the lead in the play
 - Eye contact
 - Talking/Sharing/Conversation
 - Physical contact
 - Affect and affection
 - Level of control
 - Intrusiveness

What to Look For

- Clean-Up
 - Compliance
 - Cooperation
 - Transitions

What to Look For

- Bubbles
 - This task is low stress used to help calm the child who may have had a stressful clean-up
 - However, you can also see level of control
 - Affect
 - Enjoyment

What to Look For

- Structured Tasks
 - These tasks may provide good developmental data
 - The first task should be easy to accomplish for the child's developmental level
 - The second should be somewhat more difficult
 - The third should be more challenging

What to look for during tasks

- Helpfulness/Scaffolding
- Cooperation
- Praise
- Affect – both positive and negative
- Able to sense frustration and manage it
- How to handle left-over time
- Focus, taking over

What to Look For

- Separation
 - Does the parent prepare the child?
 - How anxious is the parent?
 - What does parent do while observing child alone in the room through one way mirror? ?

What to Look For

- Reunion
 - Recognition of child's experience
 - Contact- physical and emotional
 - When the child calms
 - Behavior of child towards the caregiver

Reunion - Parent

- Parent
 - Poor – parent returns and does not reference child
 - Moderate – parent response has good and bad
 - Good – parent returns and references child, positive approach, may pick up, smiles, may talk, hug

Reunion - Child

- Child
 - Poor – no referencing of parent or approach
 - Moderate – good and bad parts
 - Good – looks at parent, smiles, approaches and raises hands, smiles, is happy

You can also observe: Positive discipline

- Physical approval – ie, clapping
- Modeling- ie, how to put toys in box for clean-up
- Direct commands – ie, you need to put the toys in the box
- Verbal approval – ie, good boy/girl, way to go

Negative discipline

- Negative physical contact – ie, forcing the child to put toys in box, grabbing child
- Negative discipline – ie, threatening child with punishment, begging
- Derogatory statements – ie, you're bad, stop acting up

Other behaviors to observe

- Use of physical aggression
- Use of negative words
- How often does parent look at baby
- How often does parent touch baby
- How often does parent talk to baby
- How often does parent smile at baby

Parenting style

- Disengaged – parent is low on warmth and low on firmness
- Permissive – parent is high on warmth and low on firmness
- Authoritarian – parent is low on warmth and high on firmness – may be punitive, coercive
- Authoritative – parent is high on warmth, high on firmness –developmentally approp.

Relationship Assessment

- Provides observational information on the relationship
- Post assessment provides information on changes in the relationship
- Can assess behavioral change and responsiveness
- Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of dyadic (infant-parent) interventions

Write Up

- How did the dyad relate to one another
- What was the overall emotional tone
- How did the caregiver relate to the child
- How did the child relate to the caregiver
- Include any descriptive examples
- What strengths could be built on
- What areas need help