

# Attachment Styles



The bonds children form with caregivers shape their relationships for life. Children develop a secure or insecure (anxious, avoidant, disorganized) attachment style based on how caregivers respond to their needs.

## SECURE

Children develop a secure attachment style when caregivers meet their needs. These caregivers provide a safe base from which children explore the world. As a result, secure children believe the world is safe and build easy bonds with others.

## ANXIOUS

Children develop an anxious attachment style from inconsistent parenting. Sometimes caregivers meet their needs; other times they do not. Never knowing if their needs will be met, anxious children live in uncertainty. As adults, they fear abandonment.

## AVOIDANT

Children develop an avoidant attachment style when caregivers ignore their needs. Caregivers withhold affection and discourage emotion. Avoidant children suppress emotion to please caregivers but lose touch with their inner world. As adults, they struggle to connect and keep their distance.

## DISORGANIZED

Children develop disorganized attachment when caregivers mistreat them or neglect their needs. Sometimes parents have addictions or mental illness. Unable to self-soothe, disorganized children face a higher risk of substance abuse and mental illness as adults.