

# Attachment and Wellbeing: What's the problem?

# What is attachment

- \* John Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory
- \* Attachment to a primary caregiver is instinctive
- \* A focus on the importance of attachment with the mother as a survival instinct

# Secure attachment

\* Mother is...

Responsive

Sensitive

Consistent

Child is...

Secure

Exploring

Happy



The child believes and trusts that his needs will be met by the caregiver

# Avoidant Attachment

\* Mother is...

Distant

Disengaged

Neglectful

\* Child is...

Withdrawn

Does not  
explore

Quiet



Child believes his needs will not be met

# Ambivalent Attachment

\* Mother is...

Inconsistent

Sometimes  
sensitive

Sometimes  
neglectful

\* Child is...

Anxious

Insecure

Angry



Child cannot rely on his needs being met

# Disorganised Attachment

\* Mother is...

Frightened

Passive

Extreme

Frightening

\* Child is...

Depressed

Angry

Passive

Unresponsive



Child is severely confused with no strategy to have his needs met

# At Three Years of Age

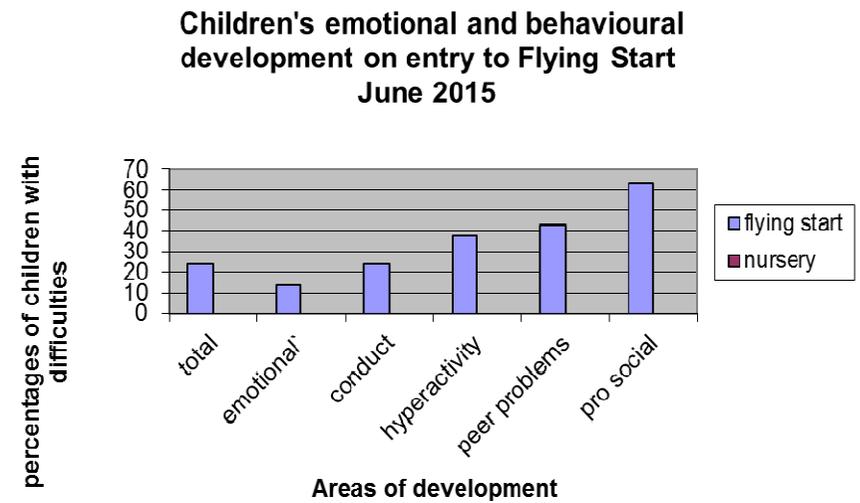
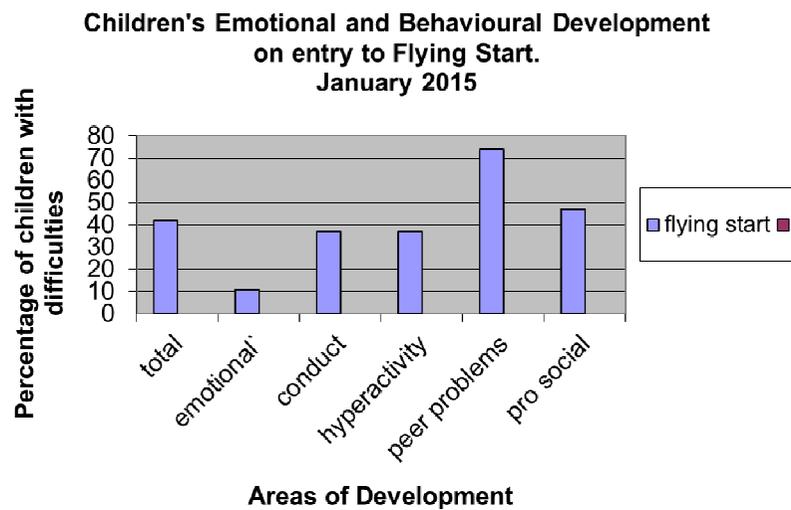


\* Perry & Pollard (1997)

# Poor attachment and socio-economic disadvantage: the evidence links

- \* Scanlon & Epkins 2013
- \* O'Neil 2010
- \* Munson et al 2001
- \* Spieker & Booth 1988
- \* Lyons-Ruth et al 1990
- \* Carlson et al 1989

# What about those who experience it?



# Stakeholder views

- \* Is this a problem?
- \* Impact of children?
- \* What support mechanisms are in place?

# Does this change anything?

- \* Emotional and behavioural development not given enough weight in curriculum
- \* Problem now?

# Existing Solutions?

- \* Main & Weston 1981
- \* Bowlby 1951 “ Difficulties which are insoluble at 13 may be handled quickly and effectively at 3.”
- \* Rutter 1985
- \* Thorburn 2014
- \* ‘Cinderella Law’

# Why does the problem still exist?

- \* Focus still on attainment in literacy and numeracy
- \* No credit or measure given for improvements in emotional wellbeing in inspection or school data
- \* Teachers and staff know it is important but need to focus on the attainment of children to show their worth and children's progress
- \* Little time left to focus on individual children's emotional and behavioural needs.

# References

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