Attachment Styles and Language Performance in Middle Childhood; Investigating the Predictive Potential for Clinical Diagnosis

Mahbobeh. Espeedkar[1], Davood. Manavipour[2*], Alireza. Pirkhaefi[2]

[1] Ph.D Student of Educational Psychology, Garmsar Branch, Azad University, Garmsar, Iran
[2] Associate Prof, Psychology Department, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: manavipor53@yahoo.com

A B S T R A C T

Objective: By exploring the language abilities of primary school children in attachment narratives and uncover potential associations between attachment styles and expressive indicators, this study investigated whether language performance can serve as a primary predictive measure for diagnosing attachment styles and injuries, particularly in cases where traditional assessment methods fall short.

Methods and Materials: This descriptive and qualitative research involved a statistical population of 100 elementary school children selected through random sampling from four locations in Tehran between 2017 and 2019. Attachment styles of the children were assessed using the Finzi questionnaire. Subsequently, two story prompts devised for Iranian children, following the MacArthur Story Completion approach, were administered according to the prescribed protocol. Qualitative coding was employed to analyze all stages of recording, implementation, and children's language performance. Then, the frequency of codes within each attachment style was assessed.

Findings: "Speech coherence" emerged as a significant indicator for secure children, while avoidant children displayed "briefness of expression" and "avoidance of response." Anxious children exhibited "talkativeness," "jumping from branch to branch," and "argument slippage," while disorganized children demonstrated "inability to respond" and "ambiguity" as key traits for early diagnosis of attachment style. Furthermore, only disorganized children showed a noticeable difference in the number of words expressed between the two stories. The primary distinction between these stories pertained to the presence of threats from parents or strangers.

Conclusion: This study suggests that attachment styles can be predicted through language performance within this sample size. Specifically, "talkative" in anxious attachment style, "avoidance of response" in avoidant attachment style, and "ambiguity and confusion" in disorganized attachment style are noteworthy indicators. Expanding the research to a larger sample size is likely to yield more precise results.

1. Introduction

The concept of mental representation has been of interest to cognitive and psychoanalytic psychologists from various perspectives. Freud paid special attention to the dimensions of mental representation for the purpose of giving meaning to experiences (Freud et al., 1991). Piaget, while considering mental representations as dependent on sensory-motor dimensions, introduced mental schemata as internal representations for the expansion of cognition (Furth, 1968). The ideas present in the joint work of Bowlby and Ainsworth, known as attachment theory, although using concepts related to developmental psychology, growth, and information processing, like other psychoanalysts, strongly focuses on the relationship between external reality and the individual's inner world (Eagle, 1995). The concept of "internal working models" introduced by Bowlby is considered as an unconscious representation that links the inner world and external reality for each individual (Bowlby, 1979; Bretherton, 1995).

The assumption of the dimensions of attachment theory's mental representations is that the pattern of caregiving relationships not only represents the nature of past interactive experiences but also allows for the prediction of future experiences and serves as a primary example of it. After the Strange Situation experiment conducted by Ainsworth, which led to the discovery of secure, insecure-avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Slade, 1994), and later the disorganized style was added to it (Main & Solomon, 1990), various assessment tools were developed to better understand attachment relationships, which are used at different ages depending on the study or clinical situation. Although questionnaires and direct interviews have advantages for understanding the damage caused by attachment in insufficiently studied children, parents, especially in high-risk families, may be concerned about judgments about their parenting skills or the emergence of child behavioral problems in places like school where parents are not present, making unreliable reports (Aebi et al., 2017; O'CONNOR & Zeanah, 2003).

On the other hand, children who are abused or harassed may not report it because they first consider chronic misbehavior as normal and secondly, due to loyalty, fear of retaliation, or embarrassment, refrain from expressing it and even internalize misbehavior as a sign of their own badness

(Slade, 1994; Slade & Aber, 1992). In the 1980s, a group of researchers inspired by psychoanalysts such as Freud, Waelder, and Winnicott, who knew that play represents children's psychological conflicts and their efforts to solve them, designed a tool that includes a standardized story set that places emotionally, morally, or socially challenging situations in front of children with the aim of eliciting responses and predicting thoughts, feelings, intentions, and behaviors of personalities through mental representations (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). This method provides valuable insights into understanding children's perceptions of social relationships, attachment history, and emotional regulation (Schechter et al., 2007).

In clinical psychology, this tool is used for the assessment and diagnosis of various disorders, including trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression, externalizing disorders such as conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder, evaluation of socio-emotional functioning in developmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, and evaluation of treatment progress by examining changes in children's narratives (Belden, Sullivan, & Luby, 2007; Green, Stanley, & Peters, 2007; Lee, 2017).

This method and similar methods have both advantages and limitations. One limitation is that the interpretation and analysis of valid responses from children depend on how the data is coded by the evaluator (Hillman et al., 2022; Kelly & Bailey, 2021; Yabsley, 2000). Therefore, different evaluators may obtain different results. Additionally, this method is usually executed through the interpretation of qualitative data obtained from the completion of narratives by children, and despite rich insights into mental representations, it lacks quantitative criteria (Kelly & Bailey, 2021; McCabe & Rollins, 1994).

In Iran, this method has been used in a study to examine the role and position of other attachment resources in middle childhood through the examination of children's mental representations (Espeedkar et al., 2022). In that study, seven stories were designed for Iranian middle childhood using the MacArthur approach, taking into account cultural fit, developmental considerations, validity of the tool, and examination of qualitative data coding indices. One of the main levels of qualitative data coding in this method is the examination of children's expressive performance (both in completing the narrative and in interacting with the examiner) (Colton, 2006).

Findings in interviews on adult attachment show a relationship between attachment style and individuals' mode of expression (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Yabsley, 2000). Evidence in the Iranian sample also suggests a relationship between linguistic elements and attachment styles (Espeedkar et al., 2022). Additionally, research emphasizes the importance of verbal interaction with children in attachment security (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

To date, no independent study has been published on the quality of the relationship between linguistic performance and attachment styles in children. The aim of this research is to study the links between attachment styles and linguistic performance and to explore the possibility of using this performance as an initial predictive indicator for identifying attachment styles, particularly in clinical cases where traditional assessment methods may not be possible. This study seeks to identify potential patterns that differentiate attachment styles in children by examining specific linguistic indices such as narrative length, speech quality, and argument structure. In the author's view, the necessity and importance of this research lies in the fact that diagnostic tests to determine attachment styles, particularly in the initial stages of diagnosis, are often difficult to execute due to parental or child cooperation, the child's ability to respond, or limitations of mental representation methods (O'CONNOR & Zeanah, 2003). Second, the limitations of tools in measuring attachment relationships in middle childhood are one of the gaps in attachment studies (Boldt et al., 2016). While many attachment problems arise when children enter school and new needs emerge in attachment relationships (Kerns, Tomich, & Kim, 2006), the child's language has reached a stage of developmental maturity that can be considered as a measurement indicator (Rotenberg, Wicks, & Bathew, 2021). Third, the use of measurement tools usually requires time and expertise in execution and interpretation (Bettmann & Lundahl, 2007). The results of this study can serve as a potential predictive indicator of attachment styles in clinical interviews, in addition to other methods. Additionally, these results can be used as one of the indicators of improvement or progress in treatment follow-up.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This research was a descriptive qualitative study. The statistical population consisted of 100 randomly selected children aged 8 to 11 years with normal conditions (attending regular schools without any specific mental or physical disorders) who visited four cultural centers in different areas of Tehran (north, south, east, and west) in four time periods. The initial sample was 120 people, of whom 18 withdrew their cooperation after holding explanatory sessions for parents. During the study, two children also ended their cooperation. These times were selected based on the centers' work process considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, the attachment style of children was determined using the Finsi questionnaire. Since this questionnaire does not identify the disorganized style, all children were re-evaluated using the mental representation assessment tool (Espeedkar et al., 2022) for further assurance. The final attachment style was the mean score of children in both tests. Then, according to the interviewer protocol, the main basis of each story was narrated to the child in order of events by showing pictures, and then the child was invited to complete the story. For example, in the stranger story, until the point where the stranger offers to play at his house, it is said, and at this point, the examiner asks the child, "Tell me what happens now? Or what happens next?" All stages of the test were filmed, and audio and visual data were coded based on the codes related to expressive performance in the McArthur method. Measures

2.1.1. Attachment Style

Considering the participants' age group in the present study, the Attachment Style Classification Questionnaire for Latency Age Children by Finzi et al. (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2012), adapted for middle childhood whose validity has been examined by Rahimian Bougar et al. (2008) in Iran, was used (Rahimian Boogar & Asgharnejad Farid, 2008). This questionnaire consists of 15 items that are based on three attachment patterns of Ainsworth (Ainsworth et al., 2015), including secure attachment (e.g., I usually believe that people close to me will not leave me), anxious attachment (e.g., sometimes I am afraid that someone does not really like me), and avoidant attachment (e.g., I do not like it when someone gets too close to me). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The internal consistency of this questionnaire is 0.80 for the anxious subscale and 0.70 for the avoidant subscale. This questionnaire does not have an item for detecting disorganized attachment style (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2012).

2.1.2. Childhood Representations

The developed tool for measuring Iranian middle childhood representations of attachment relationships based on the principles and methods of the MacArthur approach was developed and validated in an independent study (Espeedkar et al., 2022). The content validity criteria are recorded based on the three main criteria groups according to the MacArthur coding approach (Robinson & Mantz-Simmons, 2003). In the same qualitative-quantitative study, the cultural validity of the codes about the Iranian children participating in the study and the analysis of family attachment relationships (primary and secondary) were also examined (Espeedkar et al., 2022).

2.2. Data analysis

The evaluation criteria in this tool are divided into three criteria groups: 1- the method of completing the story, 2- verbal and nonverbal performance and the child's states throughout the evaluation, and 3- parental representation (10). In this study, out of 7 stories, 2 stories were selected and used to measure language performance. One of the stories was designed based on conflicts within the home (key), and the other was designed based on conflicts facing the child at school. The themes and specifications of these two stories are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1

The themes of both stories

Title	The basis of the story	Dominant feeling	The source of the threat	conflict
Key	The child loses the keys while playing, some time later the parents argue about the lost keys and accuse each other.	Guilt, shame and fear	Parents	Honesty.acceptance of responsibility.avoidance of punishment
Stranger	On the way to school, a stranger offers the child to play with his.her phone on the condition that the child goes somewhere with him.	Fear, satisfaction	Stranger	Recklessness. sense of danger, disobedience. obedience

3. Findings and Results

The "appropriate text length" code belonged to the participant who provided a complete and clear answer without the need for further questioning or guidance from the examiner. The mean scores of participants obtained from the administration of attachment style measurement tools (Finzi questionnaire and mental representation tool) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for attachment styles

Attachment styles	Secure	Avoidant	Anxious	Disorganized
Frequency	56	22	13	9
Percentage	56%	22%	13%	9%

Then, the coded visual data in the expressive performance section were compared by attachment style in the two stories. Table 3 shows the frequency of behavioral indicators resulting from the expressive performance of children with different attachment styles."

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for behavioral index for both stories

Attachment style	Story	Key story				Stranger story			
	Behavioral index	Secure	Avoidant	Anxious	Disorganized	Secure	Avoidant	Anxious	Disorganized
Secure	Appropriate text length	41	2	0	0	44	2	0	0
	Percentage	%73.2	%9	0	0	%78.6	%9	0	0
	Coherent expression	49	0	1	0	50	6	0	0
	Percentage	%87.5	0	%7.7	0	%89.3	%27.3	0	0
Avoidant	Shortness of expression	12	20	0	1	7	20	0	2

	Percentage	%21.4	%91	0	%11	%12.5	%91	0	%22.2
	Avoiding to respond	0	15	0	2	0	19	0	2
Anxious	Percentage	0	%68.2	0	%22	0	%86.4	0	%22.2
	incomplete .Verbatim slippage of reasoning.sentences	3	0	13	0	2	0	12	0
	Percentage	%5.36	0	%100	0	%3.6	0	%92.3	0
	To meander	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	0
disorganized	Percentage	0	0	%92.3	0	0	0	%92.3	0
	Unable to respond	0	0	0	8	0	4	1	6
	Percentage	0	0	0	%88.9	0	%18.2	%7.7	%66.7
	Irrelevant responses or statements	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7
	Percentage	0	0	0	%77.8	0	0	0	%77.8
	Mean of the word counts per narration	583	282	1034	303	523	312	1023	428

Frequencies indicate that:

1- Among safety indicators, "psychological and coherent expression" is a relatively stronger identification indicator than "proportional text length" in terms of frequency.

2- Safe children in terms of speech performance, on average, received "avoidance" code in 13.4% of cases and "anxiety" code in 4.5% of cases in this sample. However, none of the samples included "failure to respond", "jumping from branch to branch", "digression", "irrelevant responses" or "ambiguous expressions".

3- Although 6.9% of avoidant children had "proportional text length with the story", none of the avoidant children had "verbosity", "jumping from branch to branch", "slippery reasoning", "irrelevant responses" or "ambiguous expressions". In the stranger story where the threat situation occurs outside the home, 18.2% of avoidant children failed to respond to the examiner.

4- All anxious children in this sample included "verbosity", "incomplete or slippery reasoning sentences". Therefore, none of them had "proportional text length with the story" and only one sample had "coherent expression" in the stranger narrative. However, except for one sample that was unable to respond in the stranger narrative, the rest of the samples did not receive codes of "inability to respond and irrelevant responses/ambiguous expressions".

5- Dysfunctional samples did not receive any safety or anxiety codes, but on average, 16.7% included "shortness of expression" code and 2.2% included "failure to respond" code.

6- Comparing the language performance of children with dysfunctional style in two narratives shows that in the key story where parents are the subject of threat, "inability to respond" is 20% more than the stranger story where the threat is from an unfamiliar person.

7- There was no difference in the "irrelevant responses/ambiguous expressions" code between the two narratives.

8- The number of words each child has spoken from the beginning to the end of the test shows a significant difference between children with different attachment styles, so that anxious children have spoken almost twice as much as safe children and three times as much as avoidant children.

9- Comparing the number of words spoken in two narratives shows that anxious children had almost the same number of words in both narratives (a difference of 23 words). In the two safe and avoidant attachment groups, this difference is less than 60 words. However, in dysfunctional children, the difference is about 125 words, indicating that children were less likely to be unable to respond or ambiguous in speaking in threat situations by a stranger than in threat situations by parents.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the language performance of elementary school children in attachment stories to discover potential links between attachment styles and expressive indicators as a primary predictive indicator for identifying attachment styles and disorders. One of the methods for measuring attachment in children is through indirect completion of stories by analyzing mental representations (Robinson & Mantz-Simmons, 2003), which is applicable due to potential limitations in other methods of measuring attachment, especially in clinical, social, and legal interventions that can significantly affect a child's fate (Colton, 2006). The results of adult attachment interviews indicate a relationship between expressive performance and attachment style (Yabsley, 2000), but the quality and quantity of this relationship, especially in children's attachment, have not been independently evaluated. In the

JARAC
Espeedkar et al.
Journal of Assessment and Research in Applied Counselling 5:3 (2023) 60-67

present study, expressive performance indicators were used in the MacArthur Story Stem Battery, which is one of the most popular methods for representing attachment relationships (Bettmann & Lundahl, 2007). In a general conclusion of the findings, it is observed that the language performance of participating children is related to their attachment style. In qualitative data coding, the "coherence of speech and emotional expression" and "appropriate text length for the story" are the characteristics of a secure attachment style in children. This finding is consistent with the results of adult attachment interview studies (Yabsley, 2000) and can be influenced by effective communication and verbal interaction between caregivers and children to create attachment security. Thus, physical access and quick response to a child's needs are not sufficient to create attachment security, and language interaction between caregivers and children is necessary to better understand their desires and intentions (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

The anxiety-free practice of conversing with caregivers and expressing needs provides the basis for a child's linguistic coherence. Linguistic coherence in a child indicates that they do not need to resort to verbosity or suppression of their desires to access the responsive and supportive care of their parents. Another part of the results shows that avoidant children have attributed the most code related to "escaping responsiveness" to themselves. This result is consistent with the idea that the primary pattern in avoidant personality is to minimize dependency needs as an internal active pattern in avoidant personality (Eagle, 1995). Escaping responsiveness in this study is somewhat indicative of a lack of inclination to express thoughts, feelings, and intentions, and children in this group show a pattern of disappointment in being understood and accepted. Regarding anxious children, the results indicate a completely different pattern than other groups. Obsessive behavior in completing the story through "verbosity" and "repetition" that did not correspond to the story (unlike avoidant children who escaped responsiveness) is evident in the performance of this group. The point that distinguishes the performance of anxious children from safe children is the loss of "expressive coherence" during the test. This incoherence is manifested by expressive codes such as "incomplete sentences," "slippery reasoning," "jumping from branch to branch," and "digression." This result is consistent with the idea that the main pattern of this group is to maximize attachment behaviors to gain a sense of security (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

Additionally, the findings indicate that examining speech in disorganized children does not follow a specific pattern, and although disorganized children are closer to avoidant children in terms of brevity and escaping responsiveness, there is an apparent fear of attachment sources in the completed stories of this group, and the inability to respond is not a sign of avoidance of responsiveness, and other signs such as confusion, not hearing the question, and confusion are signs of inability to respond. This point is more evident when the difference in children's performance in completing two stories is seen. In the previous three groups, children's performance throughout the test was uniform, but disorganized children showed more difficulty in responding in the story where the source of threat was their parents, while the ability to respond was more present in the story where the source of threat was a stranger. This result is consistent with the findings of Main and Solomon (Main & Solomon, 1990). "Ambiguity in expression," "irrelevant responses," and "use of incomprehensible phrases" are features of disorganized children's expressive performance. In a section of the study, the number of independent words and combinations that each child used from the beginning to the end of the test was counted. The results show that anxious children have spoken almost twice as much as safe children and three times as much as avoidant children under equal test conditions. These results in this sample size indicate that the linguistic performance of elementary school children in attachment stories can be used as an initial predictive indicator to discover potential links between attachment styles and expressive indicators. The benefit of this study is that in many cases, it is not possible to interview children directly or use questionnaires to diagnose attachment style and history, especially for vulnerable and at-risk children. Children sometimes perceive long-term misbehavior as normal or consider themselves deserving of such behaviors, and may even be afraid of the consequences or feel betrayed by their parents and caregivers, which may prevent them from expressing their experiences (Slade, 1994). On the other hand, indirect methods such as scatter tests and story completion methods may not be useful in some situations due to their specialization and time-consuming nature (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Therefore, the existence of solutions for initial prediction of a child's attachment style and history to find a suitable conversation method with them and establish a therapeutic bond with the therapist is useful.

5. Limitations and Suggestions

Examining these areas can provide valuable insights into how attachment experiences may shape children's linguistic competencies and expressive behaviors. Limitations such as the widespread impact of COVID-19 on coordination with parents, children, and schools for accessing larger samples have presented a significant challenge. The complexities of interviewing, implementing, and coding data require significant education, expertise, and time, potentially affecting the generalizability and accuracy of results. Adapting tools to cultural conditions requires more precise cultural studies, especially in ethnic subcultures. For example, in ethnic subcultures, there may be more room for boys to speak and express themselves, while girls may be encouraged to refrain from self-expression as a value, which may have an impact on effective results that should be considered in generalizing the results.

During the study, it seemed that there were other repetitive expressive behaviors that may be culture-dependent. However, since these behaviors were not considered as indicators in larger studies, they were not examined in this study. For example, the presence of cliché phrases such as "good kids, bad kids..." or "older people know what's best for kids" or "God loves/doesn't love" was frequently seen in children's statements, causing anxiety. Also, the presence of humor such as "he beat him up, sent them to work, hit him in the face, etc." was evident in children's expressions. These phrases were not seen in other attachment styles in this sample size. Therefore, it seems that conducting a study that examines such indicators in the context of Iranian culture, in addition to common codes, can be useful.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics principles

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

References

Aebi, M., Kuhn, C., Banaschewski, T., Grimmer, Y., Poustka, L., Steinhausen, H.-C., & Goodman, R. (2017). The contribution of parent and youth information to identify mental health disorders or problems in adolescents. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*, *11*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-017-0160-9

Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. N. (2015). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315802428

Belden, A. C., Sullivan, J. P., & Luby, J. L. (2007). Depressed and healthy preschoolers' internal representations of their mothers' caregiving: Associations with observed caregiving behaviors one year later. *Attachment & Human Development*, *9*(3), 239-254. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730701455395

Bettmann, J. E., & Lundahl, B. W. (2007). Tell me a story: A review of narrative assessments for preschoolers. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *24*, 455-475. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-007-0095-8

Boldt, L. J., Kochanska, G., Grekin, R., & Brock, R. L. (2016). Attachment in middle childhood: Predictors, correlates, and implications for adaptation. *Attachment & Human Development*, *18*(2), 115-140. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2015.1120334

Bowlby, J. (1979). The bowlby-ainsworth attachment theory. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, *2*(4), 637-638. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x00064955

Bretherton, I. (1995). A communication perspective on attachment relationships and internal working models. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 310-329. https://doi.org/10.2307/1166187

Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (2016). *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications*. Rough Guides. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2008-13837-000

Colton, A. G. (2006). *The Anna Freud Centre Narrative Coding System: A study of the reliability and validity of a new coding system for the MacArthur Story Stem Battery*. University of London, University College London (United Kingdom). https://www.proquest.com/openview/7ccfd519288200cad28db8363372f783/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y

Eagle, M. (1995). The developmental perspectives of attachment and psychoanalytic theory. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1995-99050-004

Espeedkar, Mahboobe, Manavipour, Davood, Pirkhaefi, & Alireza. (2022). *Investigating the role of secondary attachment resources in middle childhood*

Finzi-Dottan, A. R., Finzi, R., Cohen, O., Sapir, Y., Weizman, A., Ram, A., & Finzi-Dottan, R. (2012). Attachment style classification questionnaire for latency age children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *11*, 441-453.

Freud, S., Sandler, J., Person, E. S., & Fonagy, P. (1991). Freud's" On narcissism: an introduction". https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130000797104947712

Furth, H. G. (1968). Piaget's theory of knowledge: The nature of representation and interiorization. *Psychological review*, *75*(2), 143. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025515

Green, J., Stanley, C., & Peters, S. (2007). Disorganized attachment representation and atypical parenting in young school age children with externalizing disorder. *Attachment & Human Development*, *9*(3), 207-222. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730701453820

Hillman, S., Villegas, C., Anderson, K., Kerr-Davis, A., & Cross, R. (2022). Internal representations of attachment in Story Stems: changes in the narratives of foster care children. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, *48*(2), 261-289. https://doi.org/10.1080/0075417X.2022.2088824

Kelly, K. R., & Bailey, A. L. (2021). Narrative story stem methodologies: Use and utility of quantitative and qualitative approaches across the lifespan. *Narrative Inquiry*, *31*(1), 163-190. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.20088.kel

Kerns, K. A., Tomich, P. L., & Kim, P. (2006). Normative trends in children's perceptions of availability and utilization of attachment figures in middle childhood. *Social Development*, *15*(1), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2006.00327.x

Lee, Y. (2017). Referential Choice in Korean-Speaking Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Main, M., & Solomon, J. (1990). Procedures for identifying infants as disorganized/disoriented during the Ainsworth Strange Situation. *Attachment in the preschool years: Theory, research, and intervention*, *1*, 121-160. https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1571980075915311744?lang=ja

McCabe, A., & Rollins, P. R. (1994). Assessment of preschool narrative skills. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *3*(1), 45-56. https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360.0301.45

O'CONNOR, T. G., & Zeanah, C. H. (2003). Attachment disorders: Assessment strategies and treatment approaches. *Attachment & Human Development*, *5*(3), 223-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730310001593974

Rahimian Boogar, E., & Asgharnejad Farid, A. A. (2008). The relationship between psychological hardiness also ego-resiliency and mental health in adolescent and adult survivors of bam earthquake. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*, *14*(1), 62-70.

Robinson, J., & Mantz-Simmons, L. (2003). The MacArthur Narrative Coding System: one approach to highlighting affective meaning making in the MacArthur Story Stem Battery. *Revealing the inner worlds of young children: The MacArthur Story Stem Battery and parent-child narratives*, 81-91.

Rotenberg, K. J., Wicks, C., & Bathew, R. (2021). Security of attachment and trust beliefs in close others during middle childhood. *Infant and Child Development*, *30*(5), e2252. https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2252

Schechter, D. S., Zygmunt, A., Coates, S. W., Davies, M., Trabka, K. A., McCaw, J., Kolodji, A., & Robinson, J. L. (2007). Caregiver traumatization adversely impacts young children's mental representations on the MacArthur Story Stem Battery. *Attachment & Human Development*, *9*(3), 187-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730701453762

Slade, A. (1994). Making meaning and making believe: Their role in the clinical process. *Children at play: Clinical and developmental approaches to meaning and representation*, 81-107. https://doi.org/10.1037/10118-006

Slade, A., & Aber, J. L. (1992). Attachments, drives, and development: Conflicts and convergences in theory. https://nyuscholars.nyu.edu/en/publications/attachment-drives-and-development-conflicts-and-convergences-in-t

Yabsley, S. A. (2000). *The reflection of patterns of attachment in infancy in narratives of preschool children*. University of London, University College London (United Kingdom). https://www.proquest.com/openview/4dfc00ca9a1b08bdbf982961a49a888a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y