

# AP EUnion



AP EUnion Newsletter

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Welcome

Would you like to get news from APEU?

Sign up for the news by email or news feed on the website

Archived news is at [www.attachmentparenting.eu/news](http://www.attachmentparenting.eu/news)

Dr Helen Ball who runs the Sleep Laboratory at Durham University has joined the Advisory Committee of AP EU. Her DVD about the Benefits of Bedsharing is excellent and a clip of it is on YouTube.

The web site is up and running and can be visited at [www.attachmentparenting.eu](http://www.attachmentparenting.eu). There is a great discussion forum in English, German and Dutch at this stage and we hope to be adding French, Danish and Italian in the near future.

Please email me with and comments or news to include in our next edition. [Kate@attachmentparenting.eu](mailto:Kate@attachmentparenting.eu)

AP EU is holding monthly On-Line Support Meetings in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday night of every month at 8.30pm GMT.

At this stage the meetings are held in English but as time goes by we should be hosting meetings in other languages too.

To connect to the meeting, go to <http://chat.xs4all.nl>, choose a nickname, enter channel: #apeuchat and join in.

You are all welcome to join the new mail group for support and discussion at <http://www.yahoogroups.com/groups/apeu>

You can subscribe by sending a blank email to [apeu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:apeu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or mail the list moderators at [apeu-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:apeu-owner@yahoogroups.com).



### Our Children

#### What they Say.....

I was out with my son Daragh who is 5. A little child was smacked by his parent in the shopping centre, my son burst into tears, I asked him to tell me what was caused him to feel sad and he replied 'that adult hit that child - he hurt him on purpose, you shouldn't hurt a child'.

Kate in Ireland

#### What They Do...

My 3 year old daughter said to me today, after enquiries as to why she'd gone all floppy and was rolling around on the floor..."I'm just really knackered mummy, I need snugly boobies and a big sleep!" -who says they have no awareness of their needs and feelings! Perfectly eloquent!

Jill in New Zealand



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## Some Information about fathers...

- Fathers and father figures are likely to respond positively to a newsletter resource that targets them specifically.
- Fathers and father figures typically turn first to informal sources, particularly a spouse or mother of their child, for information on parenting and family life. Making educational information part of a father's "social network" is thus important to reaching them in parent education.
- Fathers and father figures are likely to value an educational newsletter more highly than other formal sources of information on parenting.
- Fathers and father figures most value educational features that focus on key development needs of children, activities for engaging with children, and research facts they can use in parenting their children.
- Fathers and father figures value a variety of parenting topics in an educational newsletter, particularly those related to communication, feelings, reading, and guidance of children.

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<http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm99/fs06.html>

Research on Adult Sibling relationships

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[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_1x5UNet\\_Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_1x5UNet_Q)

Video Clip from Dr Helen Balls' DVD about Sharing Sleep.

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News, Views and Research...

<http://www.personalityresearch.org/attachment.html>

Excellent Link with information about Attachment influences on personality for adults and children.

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<http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/attachment/online/love2002.pdf>

Research paper on how Attachment influences Love..

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### **Do movies, video games and the Internet depicting violence encourage bullying?**

The answer to that is complex, but in summary, is yes. Why wouldn't it? It is amazing when one looks at the research which shows that children view an average of 10,000 acts of violence yearly on television alone, including South Park, Beavis & Butthead, and the Simpson's! Children spend 16-20 hours a week playing video games, and 4-8 hours watching movies. In general, 57 percent of all TV programs have violence in them, 73 percent of which goes unpunished, and for 58 percent no pain is registered at the violence. Research at the Menninger Clinic shows that children who have conduct problems show responses to violent movie clips that indicate a type of numbing out of violence. Sometimes a smile indicates that responses to the violence have been suppressed. Whereas this could be a survival tactic of some value when conscious, if it becomes too much of a habit, it creates an apparent remorseless and lack of empathy in the child. Overall, the evidence is that repeated, merciless violence in the media; newspapers, movies, television, or Internet, may predispose a child to violent thoughts and acts both in their current and perhaps even later life.

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### **ATTACHMENT PARENTING:SOUND SCIENCE OR NEW-AGE CRAZE?**

Have you noticed that quite a few mothers and fathers are now 'wearing' their babies in a sling? They look quaint, and kind of 'tribal', don't they? You may have felt confronted by the sight of a mother nursing a toddler (isn't he too old for that?!). You might know a couple who sleep with their baby in bed with them (are they crazy?).

They may all be practising attachment parenting - learning to interpret and respond to babies' specific need-cues, and meeting their emotional needs on their own terms. This kind of parenting stresses the importance of things like gentle birthing methods, breastfeeding babies on demand, child-led weaning, sleeping close to baby, and wearing baby on your body during the day. These measures are designed to foster babies' healthy emotional development. It is claimed that this will make them more resilient, more autonomous and better able to have good relationships as they grow. Is this a romantic New-Age ideal? Is it based on anything scientific?

In fact, attachment parenting is the culmination of the largest body of international research ever compiled on child development and emotional intelligence. The basic premises are:

1. In order to feel secure, and for healthy emotional development, babies need to feel 'attached' to a few, consistent, carers (preferably mum, dad, close kin or friends) that are dependably warm and responsive.
2. Secure attachment depends on how closely parents are able to respond to their babies' dependency needs.
3. Insecure attachment may have a profound, long-term negative impact on emotional development, personality and human relationships.



Over the last couple of decades, hundreds of meticulously constructed studies have been conducted around the world, telling us some crucial things about how children develop emotionally. We have learned that babies are not born predisposed to feeling secure or insecure and that the key to secure attachment is the parents' warmth, and their prompt and consistent efforts to soothe their babies' distress. We have also learned that we cannot 'spoil' our babies by always responding to their needs, and our impatient push to make them more independent inhibits their exploration, and tends to make them more clingy. Overall, attachment research has shown us why we should avoid leaving our babies to cry, or deliberately force them to wait for soothing contact or nourishment.

Studies have enabled researchers to determine that early attachment experiences have far-reaching psychological and social repercussions.

Insecurely attached babies are more likely to become insecure as children. Emotionally secure babies, on the other hand, enjoy many personal advantages as toddlers - they are likely to become more enthusiastic, persistent and cooperative and they tend to be less oppositional, less angry, less fearful and more joyous. Secure babies grow to be more popular among their peers, more socially competent, and more capable of empathy towards others.



- Teenagers have a heightened need for privacy. Experiencing privacy gives them a new sense of control and autonomy. They need privacy to test things out for themselves without parent input.
- Teenagers may feel all-powerful and all-knowing at the same time that they experience fears of inadequacy and failure.
- Teens still need an adult to relate to, but in a different way than they did when they were younger.

## A Look At Our Teens by Kate Byrne

We need to better understand adolescent developmental stages to help us not take teenage behaviour as a personal attack on us. By becoming familiar with these stages, we will increase our competence in encouraging teens to establish their sense of identity.

- Teens are preparing to separate or individuate from the family. They are in the process of developing their values.
- Teenagers must initiate this separation and often rebellion gives them the energy to do this. A teenager challenges rules and values as a way of establishing his or her individuality. Adolescents cannot do this in a vacuum, but rather through conflict and confrontation.
- Adolescents may be rude or make fun of parents and other authority figures and not want to be with them. In a teenager's mind, defiance expresses autonomy and says that he or she doesn't need parents in and often serves as a test of parental caring.
- Due to body changes, there can be confusion about whether teenagers really do want to grow up.
- Hormonal changes cause mood swings marked by tearfulness, heightened sensitivity, sudden flare-ups, an increased need for physical activity and inappropriate laughter and giggling.
- Teens begin to work out their relationships with their peers to find out how they fit in.
- Teens start relating to the opposite sex in a different way than they did when they were younger (where there were once friendships, romantic relationships and/or deeply felt negative emotions may surface).

The implications are momentous: children's moral development, as well as their social development, is a function of how sensitively they were treated as babies, how promptly and consistently their needs were attended to.



Toddlers who were securely attached as infants are more resilient, and more independent. Because they are more assertive, these children are more difficult to bully, and hence they are less likely to be targeted. Conversely, insecurely attached babies tend to seek attention in oblique or irritating ways and are more likely, as they grow, to be either clingy and hypersensitive, or aggressive and disruptive.

Much of what may be labelled as a 'discipline problem' or a 'behaviour problem' has its genesis in the attachment stage. Children who have spent enough time away from their parents to become insecurely attached tend to be less compliant with their parents. On the other hand, a number of studies show that children who are emotionally secure are more cooperative and develop a stronger conscience. Findings such as these are forcing us to reappraise our views on 'good behaviour'. They suggest that the most important 'discipline' method is to ensure that our babies benefit from secure attachment; if we want 'good' children, we first of all must fulfill their dependency needs.

Security of attachment is also relevant to the issue of sibling rivalry. Children who are emotionally secure are more likely to comfort distressed younger siblings, and less likely to get into conflicts with them. This is not surprising, since empathy arises out of emotional security.

The effects of early attachment are long-term. Studies show that ten year olds who were treated with acceptance and sensitivity as babies tend to be more self-confident and less hostile. Teenagers with a secure attachment history are better able to handle conflict, are more assertive, less angry and more admired by their peers. There is an increasing sense that many psychopathologies in teenagers - such as depression, or anxiety disorders - may be traceable to their attachment history.

Insecure attachment also makes us more vulnerable to stress-related problems as adults. For instance, survivors of trauma who have had a stable attachment history are less likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorders, but if early attachment relationships are seriously disrupted, this can contribute to depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, panic attacks, agoraphobia and even eating disorders. Insecure attachment can also foster a range of anti-social behaviours, contributing to the incidence of violent crime and delinquency.

For human babies, there is evidence that the natural weaning age is probably well over two years, and anywhere up to six or seven years. Certainly we know that breastfeeding affords a vital psychological and immunological sustenance which goes on long after it is nutritionally necessary. We also know that it is one of the main sources of security and emotional wellbeing for babies and toddlers - suckling stimulates the secretion of oxytocin, a hormone associated with peaceful contentment, and this is passed directly to the baby through the mother's milk. Our early weaning standards certainly warrant revision.

The Norwegian society is also child centered in the sense that most parents spend a lot of time with their young ones. It is an increasing trend that children partake in organized activities in the evenings, costing money and "forcing" parents to drive their young ones to and from. But there is a bright side to this too. A lot of parents get involved with volunteer-work centered around their kids activities, and this makes opportunities for nice bonding between both grown-ups and children in the society. But families engage in other activities too like skiing, hiking in the woods, sailing, and so forth. Norwegians like to be out-door. And we don't mind getting an extremely dirty kid home for supper in the evening. Then we know that he has had a good time.

Violently disciplining children is illegal in Norway. For example: You re not allowed to spank your kids.

Norway is mainly nice country to raise kids in. When it comes to Attachment Parenting we have these main challenges:

1. There are too few midwives, especially on the countryside.
  2. When the baby is about 6 months of age most mothers are told to use cry it out to make it sleep though the night.
  3. Most women quit nursing when the child is 1 year old, and even if it is an increasing trend towards prolonged nursing, there are still potential for improvement here.
  4. There is too much emphasis on the importance of kindergarten, even for kids down to one year old.
3. Helping the Norwegian mother to learn the joy of baby wearing. In Norway we are very accustomed to strollers.

## Parenting in Norway

by Else Merete Thyness

Norway is a cold country, but the people are warm at heart, and we cherish our children. As parents we expect them to play and have fun.

Most families are centered around their children, and the Norwegian legislation provides a nice framework allowing women and men to have both careers and kids, with a lengthy maternity- and paternity leave. Right now the length of the maternity leave is 52 weeks, and 6 of these weeks are assigned the father. Some fathers take more though. And it is not uncommon to see a man with a baby meeting up with another man and his baby at a café. Further both parents have the right to reduce their work hours, when the kids are young, and no one expects a mother or father to work overtime if he or she has a child to pick up at the kindergarten. If you choose not to have your child in a kindergarten, you get an extended child-support till the child is 3 of age.

If you should get pregnant when you are a student, you get 10 months maternity-leave from your studies, and a grant which equals what you usually would get in a combined grant and studyloan.

Antenatal health care in Norway are fully financed through the public health care system. It's most common to give birth in hospital. Most births are done with only the help of a midwife. Doctors are only called if the birth is not going as expected. Some hospitals also have special birth-wards for women who want natural births. Many hospitals have baby-friendly maternity wards. This means they have to follow the ten steps to successful breastfeeding made by UNICEF and WHO.

Most women nurse their babies, and we are allowed to do so in public. We usually nurse between 6 and 12 months, which is logical since most mothers return to their job at that point. Should a mother decide to continue to nurse after she returns to work, she is allowed by law to take time off to nurse, either in two 30-minutes breaks per day, or to cut one work-hour per day.

The old practice of schedule-feeding babies has been officially rejected in favour of demand-feeding, an important measure for babies' physical and emotional health. In a 1998 media alert, the American Academy of Pediatrics stated: "...the best feeding schedules for babies are the ones babies design themselves...Scheduled feedings designed by parents may put babies at risk of poor weight gain and dehydration". Babies signal their hunger to us quite clearly before they begin to cry. They turn their heads toward the breast, they extend their lips, they become agitated, or they begin sucking their hands. These are the kinds of cues that pediatricians now urge mothers to respond to as promptly as possible. A baby's cry is usually a late indicator of their hunger. And babies hunger for more than milk, they hunger for intimacy; to drink in maternal love.

Many paediatricians, psychologists and other child health experts now advocate co-sleeping, a foundation method of attachment parenting. The sleep patterns of infants who sleep apart from their mothers have been observed to be fitful and restless, with frequent awakening. They tend to suck more on their thumbs or inanimate objects, a sign of increased stress. Their core temperature drops, and they suffer an increase in stress hormones. Infants are sensitive to both the sound and the rhythm of their parents' breathing and they are directly pacified by the sound of their parents' heartbeats. There is also a growing consensus that co-sleeping, putting the baby to sleep on his or her back, and night-time breastfeeding can reduce the risk of SIDS. (Please note that families with problems such as alcoholism, obesity, drug or tobacco dependency or psychological instability are not advised to sleep with their babies.)

Attachment parenting is the antithesis of 'controlled crying', which has been a controversial technique used by many parents to train their babies to fall asleep by themselves. The Australian Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMHI) has issued a position statement regarding this practice, which is unequivocal and unambiguous. Part of this statement says: "AAIMHI is concerned that the widely practised technique of 'controlled crying' is not consistent

with what infants need for their optimal emotional and psychological health, and may have unintended negative consequences.”

If at night, babies feel more secure when they can sleep near us, in the daytime they also want regular body contact. Typically, babies carried in a sling, or somehow on the body tend to be more placid and content - as long as the parents are relaxed about it.

Although it will take a few more years for 'attachment parenting' to become the norm, attachment thinking has become mainstream among academics and health professionals. Far from being a fad, it is standard practice for child psychiatrists and child psychologists who are up-to-date with new developments, and it is central to paediatrics. Nowadays, formal training in any profession related to child development involves learning attachment theory. Practitioners who qualified before this body of knowledge was established are even being re-trained, so that child health services can more uniformly reflect the findings of this new science.

World conferences on attachment and infant mental health take place every year and provide a forum for disseminating ongoing research. The most recent (2004) World Association for Infant Mental Health annual convention took place in Melbourne, Australia.

Our children behave as well as they are treated. In a world in which all children are treated with dignity, respect, understanding, and compassion they can grow into adulthood with a generous capacity for love and trust.

**Robin Grille is a Sydney-based psychologist. His new book: 'Parenting for a Peaceful World' is available at: [www.our-emotional-health.com](http://www.our-emotional-health.com)**

### Observations from a Large Family...

The tribe have experienced an interesting summer due to an awful Irish rainy season! So a lot of time has been spent indoors. The question has been posed by friends, neighbors and interested people about child centeredness versus Playful Parenting and how we work within our family.

Firstly I have found that due to our lifestyles and culture these days we have smaller families so our interactions with our children are more centered. I observe with interest how our youngest watches his brothers, he is absorbing so much and learning about our family in the process. The children also learn from how we react to him which then influences how they react. He climbs, he climbs a lot and very well – we do not react but allow him the space to learn his abilities with confidence, his brothers follow our lead and watch without assisting or anxiety. This is true tribal living for us as he wanders off to do his own thing, I call him the potterer as he is very talented at pottering around the house. When he needs me, he finds me. He is not stuck for company and all the children run to him if he calls out. They take on a naturally nurturing role as a group.

I would say that with less children a balance would work out where sometime is spent being child centered and other time spent doing the daily things that need to be done which is also a great learning opportunity for our children to see their role within the family and their responsibilities too, I have seen that when we play (which this summer has been lots of cricket) we are relaxed and when we work it is less of a chore when we work as a team. Tadhg in a sling watching and learning and the others taking part in the activities of our household 'work'.



voice to her increased interest in power and grandeur, but she still has private feelings of being vulnerable. Fearful dreams may disrupt her sleep, and she may express daytime fears about aliens, ghosts, and monsters. These fears reflect an awareness of danger. Now that your child can mentally bridge her feelings of vulnerability to real as well as imagined threats, she may need extra time for loving, empathetic interaction with you to reassure her that bad things won't happen to her. She may even create an imaginary friend to provide her with an additional sense of security.

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## Book Corner Thumbs up ...

### **A Quiet Place By Peggy O'Meara**



The book is a peace filled and relaxing experience. Each essay respectfully and earnestly looks at its subject with words of encouragement, wisdom and acceptance not only from a child's point of view but also from a parental and community point of view.

### **Magical Parent, Magical Child**



#### **by Michael Mendizza**

This is a lovely gentle book about parent child relationship development through play as a learning experience. It nurtures the parent as well as the child and cites interesting research in both fields of science and philosophy. The theory in the book is heartwarming and insightful.

### **Self Esteem by Tony Humphreys**



This book is about all aspects of self-esteem and the negative and positive effects of low self esteem to high self esteem and how it affects all parts of our lives, children and parents. The main focus I feel in this book is about healing ourselves and allowing us as parents to develop our self esteem thus helping our children.

### **Creative Journal for Parents**



#### **by Lucia Capacchione**

The book is about how to create a journal of exercises to be the parent you want to be using imagery and exercises of creativity, writing, collage and right and left brain function. Its about preparing to deal with who you are before, during or after becoming a parent.

## When Aggression is Healthy in Children

Oddly enough, the appearance of aggressive themes in your child's pretend play and conversation during this stage can be another sign of developmental progress. As parents we want to foster feelings that fuel assertiveness and a healthy interest in power, yet control the acting out of aggression in which a child might hit, hurt, or break things. You'll see constructive uses of aggressiveness during your child's pretend play, when she takes on the role of the biggest and most powerful superhero who cuts the bad guys down to size, or becomes the most beautiful and talented ballerina in the company. You'll also notice when aggressiveness enters into her conversations with you, as she forcefully states her own point of view. Most parents try to promote this quality in their children; they don't want them to be timid or passive. They want their children to feel comfortable raising their hands in school, volunteering, participating in discussions, and holding their own during a debate.

All children need opportunities for exploring assertiveness, and rely on you to set behavioral limits that will keep their impulsive acting out in check. A lot of parents have special trouble dealing with their children's impassioned pleas for toy guns, swords, or space lasers, and feel appalled that their sweet-tempered children suddenly seem determined to ape the violence they see on television or at the movies. Parents should be encouraged to follow their own cultural and religious values, and allow only those toys in their home that they feel comfortable with. However, it is important to realize that if children aren't permitted to explore one avenue of assertiveness, they will need to explore another.

Many children will use their hands and fingers as pretend space lasers or guns despite their parents' best efforts to discourage violent play. It's important to recognize that you must offer your child some avenues of assertiveness. You want to help her use her words to elaborate all the themes of life, from power and assertiveness to sweetness and loving-kindness. If you cut out all areas of assertiveness

from her experience, you'll be undermining a very important part of her emotional life. It's simply impossible for your child to avoid dealing with aggression. A child may manage temporarily to inhibit it but wind up becoming overly anxious or passive or controlled. The aggressive feelings may sneak out in more impulsive ways.

There are many ways within a variety of cultural and religious traditions to express assertiveness and to experiment with power using words and imaginative play. Perhaps a character could cast a magic spell on someone, or succeed in jumping higher than anyone else. Don't be surprised if Barney occasionally threatens to squash the other dolls in their beds! Even your child's accompanying dialogues may be filled with angry words.

Try not to overreact when your four-year-old temporarily becomes preoccupied with these aggressive themes. Each time she imagines herself to be bigger, stronger, and faster than the scariest creature that haunts her dreams, she regains a sense of control over her life. Combining her new interests with your warmth and empathy will, over time, help her join angry and loving feelings. This will enable her eventually to become a warm, loving, yet assertive, person.

As your child grows capable of linking her ideas into complex thoughts, she realizes that she is able to spark certain reactions in others. During make-believe sessions with you and others, she can assume the role of the bad guy and knock down houses and take aim at the good guys. She's waited a long time to feel powerful and in control, and now can safely test the boundaries of acting aggressively. The inviolate floor-time rules of never inflicting bodily harm or deliberately breaking toys provide her with a comforting set of limits; she knows you'll rein her in if her aggressive play gets too boisterous.

You may note an increase in your child's verbal feistiness around her fourth birthday. Because she's thinking more logically now, she's more willing to challenge your authority. After all, she can summon lots of good reasons why she shouldn't have to toe the line all the time. When you tell her to hurry up and get dressed, she may coolly inform you, "No, I won't get dressed. Clothes are stupid." Your child's bold words and aggressive pretend play give