

**ARTICLE REFERENCE:** Lederberg, A. R. & Mobley, C. (1990). The effect of hearing impairment on the quality of attachment and mother-toddler interaction. *Child Development*, 61, 1596-1604. DOI: 10.2307/1130767

**KEYWORDS:** Attachment, Social-Emotional Development, Relationships

**WHAT WAS STUDIED, HOW WAS IT STUDIED AND RESULTS:** Security of attachment is an important way to describe the relationship between infants or toddlers and their caregivers. A secure attachment is the foundation of future social-emotional health. When parents are responsive to their children's needs, children develop a sense of security that serves as the basis for their relationships for the rest of their lives. This study compared maternal attachment of deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH) toddlers with that of a matched sample of hearing toddlers. The quality of attachment and the quality of mother-toddler interaction were similar in both groups, even though there were more communication breakdowns between DHH toddlers and their mothers. In other words, children's hearing loss was not a risk factor for developing an insecure attachment with a caregiver. In both groups, there were equal numbers of toddlers who showed secure and insecure attachments to their mothers. The security, or quality, of attachment, but not children's hearing loss, was related to the quality of mother-child interaction.

**HOW THIS INFORMATION MAY BE USEFUL TO YOU AND YOUR CHILD:** The study indicates that parents of DHH infants and toddlers can be equally sensitive to their children's emotional needs as parents of hearing toddlers---even when a hearing loss makes communication challenging. That means DHH children do not develop insecure attachments even when their hearing loss results in language delays. Information about how to support the development of a secure attachment can be used by parents of DHH infants to ensure they support a high-quality relationship with their baby.

**WHO WAS STUDIED:**

- 41 DHH toddlers and their hearing mothers; 41 hearing toddlers and their hearing mothers.

**WHAT STILL REMAINS TO BE ANSWERED:** Risk factors that are associated with insecure attachments between DHH infants and their caregivers

**WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://www.developmentalscience.com/blog/2017/3/31/what-is-a-secure-attachmentand-why-doesnt-attachment-parenting-get-you-there>

<http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/articles/research-to-policy/practice/get-in-touch-with-what-your-children-need>

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=738>

