

***First Connections:  
Attachment and Its Lasting Importance  
Objectives***

During this call, panelists will:

1. Define attachment and quality of attachment;
2. Highlight long-term benefits of secure attachments;
3. Offer strategies for promoting secure attachment – particularly between young children and their parents – in child care and home visiting settings.
4. Identify ways that the *Early Moments Matter* materials can support staff in learning about and sharing information about attachment.

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**Faculty Biographies**

**Amanda Perez, M.S.W., Moderator**



Senior Writer/Training Specialist  
Early Head Start National Resource Center

Amanda Perez has worked with the Early Head Start National Resource Center since 2000. She has coordinated over 30 audioconferences in that time. A writer and trainer, Amanda also moderates the parent panel at the Birth To Three Institute.

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**Janell J. Frazier**



Executive Director  
Central Texas 4C, Inc.  
Temple, TX

For almost 50 years, Janell J. Frazier has been committed to education, first as a student, then as a teacher and, for the past ten years, as the Executive Director of a community-based non-profit organization that administers Head Start and Early Head Start programs. She has led her program in developing a research-based, child-centered and family-focused model of comprehensive services. Janell believes that strong attachments are fundamental for young children in much the same way that she sees strong personal relationships as the basis for Central Texas 4C's continued excellence. Janell has a Master's in Business Management from Texas A & M University.

**Faculty (cont'd.)**

**Mónica Ortiz**



Early Head Start Program Coordinator  
Family Services Agency, Inc.  
Gaithersburg, MD

Mónica Ortiz worked in a program for gang-affiliated youth when she decided she could have a bigger impact working with younger children and their families. Over the next several years, she took several positions working with at-risk children and their families. She served as an interpreter, a special educator, an ESL teacher, a kindergarten teacher, and a project director before accepting the position as the Early Head Start Coordinator at Family Services in 2007. Mónica sets a priority around the social and emotional development of the infants and toddlers, and has worked with her staff to implement the pyramid model of the Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) as a key aspect of her program. She has a Master's of Education degree in Risk and Prevention from Harvard University.

**Brandi Jordan Rouse**

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Founder and Owner  
The Cradle Company  
Los Angeles, CA

Brandi Jordan Rouse is a consultant, parent educator, group leader, doula and clinician. She has been helping new parents since 1998 and has worked with hundreds of newborns and their families. Brandi also provides individual and family therapy in a non-profit community mental health setting working with children and families dealing with issues related to trauma, migration, addiction, and abuse. In her work, she takes a practical and pragmatic approach to supporting children and families in building secure attachments and healthy interactions. Brandi, a featured expert in the *Early Moments Matter* materials, holds a Master's of Social Work from the University of Southern California.

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***Head Start Program Performance Standards***

**§ 1304.21 (a) Child development and education approach for all children.**

(2) Parents must be:

- (i) Invited to become integrally involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education;
- (ii) Provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences; and
- (iii) Encouraged to participate in staff-parent conferences and home visits to discuss their child's development and education.

**§ 1304.21 (b) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers.**

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage:
  - (i) The development of secure relationships in out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers by having a limited number of consistent teachers over an extended period of time. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and, whenever possible, speak the child's language; and
  - (ii) Trust and emotional security so that each child can explore the environment according to his or her developmental level.

**§ 1304.40 (e) Parent involvement in child development and education.**

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities to include parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education.
- (2) Grantees and delegate agencies operating home-based program options must build upon the principles of adult learning to assist, encourage, and support parents as they foster the growth and development of their children.
- (3) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children and to share concerns about their children with program staff.



**§ 1306.33 (b) Home based program option**

- (1) The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.

# ***First Connections: Attachment and Its Lasting Importance***

## **Defining “Attachment”**

**“Attachment** is the emotional connection children form with their parents or primary caregivers.”  
- *Early Moments Matter*

Young children are driven to develop relationships with the people who care for them. All children form attachments and can form attachments with more than one person. The quality of these attachments is based in an adult’s responsiveness to a child. When families and caregivers consistently interact with babies in safe and predictable ways that meet their needs, children develop secure attachments. When those interactions are scary, unpredictable, and/or don’t meet children’s needs, babies may develop insecure attachments.

Staff can observe children to learn about their attachments. A few points:

- Children with different temperaments show attachment differently. Pay attention to how children express their temperaments as they react to new situations and unfamiliar people.
- Culture impacts how families and caregivers interact with children. Talk with families about their beliefs and interactions to understand more.
- There are many reasons that families – particularly stressed families – may struggle with responding to their children’s needs. Approach this work with sensitivity and understanding.

### **Children with secure attachments:**

- Trust that their physical needs will be met by adults. This security allows children to focus on learning new skills and building relationships.
- Trust that adults will be emotionally available to them. They learn that they can be close with another person and still be safe. They can explore and return to their special adults when they need a hug, a pat, or encouragement.
- Learn to communicate in a variety of ways. When adults respect and respond to infants’ attempts to communicate, the children’s use of language develops into more complex and sophisticated forms over time.
- Begin to manage (self-regulate) their strong reactions and emotions with the help of adults. Adults can help children manage and express their emotions in healthy ways and help them learn that strong feelings are OK feelings.

### **Children with insecure attachments:**

- Behave as though they know that adults are inconsistently or seldom available.
- Stay close to an adult to get their needs met, inhibiting their exploration as a mobile infant or toddler.
- Become distressed, but do not seek an adult to help them manage their emotions. If adults are frequently angry with or intrusive towards young children, they may initially avoid adults, but, as they grow older, they may show anger with or frustration toward adults or peers.
- Hide their strong feelings and withdraw to avoid distressing events or to organize their emotions. When they withdraw, they miss opportunities to learn how to handle distress or express feelings in a healthy way.
- Seem disorganized or confused about how to behave in relationships.

- Table adapted from Wittmer, *Attachment: What Works?*

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## **Attachment's Lasting Importance**



The development of a young child into an adult is complex and complicated. Researchers have examined attachment since John Bowlby described it in the late 1950's. They have looked at behaviors, attitudes, and learning. We know now that those early attachments even impact the structure of the brain. Many describe attachment as the foundation of development. As children experience secure attachments, they develop a sense of themselves as important and valuable and the world as friendly. By following babies to adulthood, longitudinal researchers have found that babies with secure attachments grow up to:

Develop healthier relationships with children, partners and peers

Become more independent and self-reliant

Be more curious and motivated to learn

Do better in school

Have greater confidence and a greater sense of self-worth

Develop good problem-solving skills, including persistence

Cope with negative emotions, including stress and frustration

Communicate effectively

### **Please note:**

So much of your work is about resilience! Even when babies develop insecure early attachments, there is always a possibility for change and growth. Talk with families about the importance of attachment and responsive care, even when babies are older. Recognize the staff role in providing nurturing support to children and families who may not have had secure attachment in prior relationships.

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**Five Steps to Attachment**

The *Early Moments Matter (EMM)* materials offer five steps to attachment. Consider the work you do in your program. What do you already do to support these steps towards secure attachment between the children and parents you serve? As you listen to faculty, consider the strategies they share. Brainstorm new strategies that will help in the work that you do. What would you like to try? Add additional pages as necessary.

|           | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Pages in<br/><i>EMM</i></b> | <b>What do we already do?</b> | <b>What can we try?</b> |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Understand your child's cues and style of communication.</b>                    | 28-32                          |                               |                         |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Create a foundation of security and trust with your baby.</b>                   | 33-35                          |                               |                         |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Provide consistent and responsive parenting.</b>                                | 36                             |                               |                         |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Connect with your child through touch, physical comfort, laughter, and play</b> | 37-40                          |                               |                         |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Care for yourself and your emotional well-being.</b>                            | 41-42                          |                               |                         |

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### **Applying the Information**

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program's approach to promoting secure attachment.

1. Consider the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* on page 4. Why do you think these particular requirements are included as part of the *Standards*? How does your program meet these requirements?
2. As faculty discuss, this audioconference is focused on the relationship between families and their babies. Do you/Why do you think that focusing on the parent/family-child relationship is important? Do you believe the parent/family-child relationship is an important target of your work? Why or why not?
3. Consider the definition on page 5. We know that children can build attachments with more than one adult. This is particularly important in center-based and family child care settings. *For staff working in those settings*, how do you work to be responsive and build attachments with the children you serve? What is easy about that? What is more difficult? How do you address the challenges of that work?
4. What is easy about supporting families in building secure attachments with their children? What is challenging? How do you address the challenges of that work?
5. Read the descriptions of children experiencing secure and insecure attachments on page 5. Researchers look at behavior to offer clues about attachment. Why do you think temperament and culture are so important to consider as you are looking at attachment?
6. Children with insecure attachments are at greater risk for behavioral issues. Consider the description of the behaviors associated with insecure attachment on page 5. Does this description remind you of children you serve/have served? How does having this information help you to understand the children you serve?
7. People who had insecure attachments as babies may grow up without having had the experience of secure attachment. Consider the families you serve. Does this information/How does this information help you to approach or understand families you serve?
8. Look at the long-term impacts of secure relationships described on page 6. How does this information help you celebrate your important work?
9. Use the chart on page 7 to consider and discuss the "Steps to Attachment" described in the *Early Moments Matter* materials. How do you support those steps in your work? What would you like to try? How do those steps relate to the *Standards* listed on page 4?
10. The Office of Head Start is providing a number of resources to your program. Look through the *Early Moments Matter* materials review the information on pages 9 and 10 of this packet. How can you/your program use these resources?

# A guide to fully utilizing *Early Moments Matter: Small Steps, Long-lasting Effects*

*Early Moments Matter* is a valuable resource kit for your Early Head Start, or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program. This is a quick guide to the contents of your toolkit and some ideas on how to best put them to use.

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| <b>Pamphlet:</b><br><b>A Guide for Parents<br/> and Caregivers</b>    | This pamphlet summarizes the handbook and the DVD. It is a quick introduction of this tool for staff and the families with whom you work. It offers a succinct definition of attachment and how the handbook and DVD can give families key information as they raise their young children.   |
| <b>Pamphlet:</b><br><b>A Guide for<br/> Professionals</b>             | The back page of this pamphlet offers tips for how professionals can use this resource to explain the concept of attachment, develop action plans with families as they parent, and check in with families as they raise their young children.   |
| <b>Pamphlet:</b><br><b>Supporting<br/> Postpartum Families</b>        | This pamphlet from Postpartum Support International is a useful resource for home visitors and something you can have available in the parent area at your centers. It discusses potential postpartum needs of families in a way that really helps families understand the needs they may have and how to address them. Follow the link on the front cover of the pamphlet to download and print your own copies of this pamphlet in both English and Spanish. |
| <b>Bookmark:</b><br><b>10 Ways to<br/> Connect with Your Baby</b>     | This bookmark is a simple and succinct way to inspire adults to connect with babies. It also offers resources for new parents. Share this information with families on home visits or at socializations.   |
| <b>Magnet:</b><br><b>5 Small Steps with<br/> Long-lasting Effects</b> | This is a wonderful item to post at your program as a reminder to caregivers about how to connect with young children.   |

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| <p><b>Handbook:</b><br/> <b>Early Moments Matter;<br/> Building Attachments: Birth<br/> – 18 Months</b></p> | <p>This handbook covers the basics of attachment, the attachment dynamic and five steps to attachment. It includes information on milestones, troubleshooting, and additional resources. It also offers examples of its concepts that can spark conversation with parents in your program. While you can offer this to staff or parents to read through, it may be more meaningful to use sections to launch discussions on home visits or during parent meetings. You can even use it as a training guide with new staff.</p> <p>Some especially helpful sections are:</p> <p>p. 28 Understand your child’s cues and style of communication</p> <p>p. 30 How alert is your child? - This section has photos of babies at varying states of alertness. Use it with families to talk about how they know when their babies are alert and ready to play or preparing for sleep.</p> <p>p. 32 &amp; p. 35 Crib Notes - These are worksheets that you can provide to parents or discuss with them on a home visit. They offer information, tips and questions to help them think about their baby’s cues.</p> <p>p. 53-58 Developmental Milestones – This section offers worksheets which list developmental milestones and provide attachment tips. Each page includes a section for parents to note special memories. Provide these to parents for their own use, or work on them together.</p> |
| <p><b>DVD:</b><br/> <b>Early Moments Matter/Los<br/> Primeros Momentos<br/> Importan</b></p>                | <p>Use this DVD in staff trainings, parent socializations or home visits. The information is broken up into sections and can either be viewed all at one time or shown in sections to address more specific topics. The DVD in its entirety is about 28 minutes long. It can be viewed in either English or Spanish. The DVD can be used on its own or with the handbook. It offers real-life examples and real families who are building secure attachment with their children. The sections on the DVD follow the chapters in the handbook.</p> <p>Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best beginnings</li> <li>Creating attachment</li> <li>The five steps to creating attachment</li> <li>Challenges to parent &amp; child attachment</li> <li>On your way</li> </ul>  |

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## **Additional Resource List**

For more information, see the following resources:

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Learning. *Understanding Your Child's Behavior: Reading Your Child's Cues from Birth to Age 2*. Nashville, TN: Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Learning. Available on-line at [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/reading\\_cues.pdf](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/reading_cues.pdf)
- Diener, Marissa L., M. Angela Nievar, and Cheryl Wright. "Attachment Security Among Mothers and Their Young Children Living in Poverty: Associations with Maternal, Child, and Contextual Characteristics," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* (2003). Available on-line at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3749/is\\_200304/ai\\_n9224451/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3749/is_200304/ai_n9224451/)
- Fuertes, Marina, Pedro L.D. Santos, Marjorie Beeghly, and Edward Tronick. "More Than Maternal Sensitivity Shapes Attachment: Infant Coping and Temperament." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1094 (2006):292-6.
- Honig, Alice S. 2002. *Secure Relationships: Nurturing Infant-Toddler Attachments*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Landry, Susan H., Karen E. Smith, and Paul R. Swank. 2006. "Responsive Parenting: Establishing Early Foundations for Social, Communication, and Independent Problem-Solving Skills," *Developmental Psychology*, 42 (2006): 627-42. Available on-line at [http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/dmessenger/c\\_c/rsres/rdgs/intervention/landrysmithswank2006.dp.pdf](http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/dmessenger/c_c/rsres/rdgs/intervention/landrysmithswank2006.dp.pdf)
- Mercer, Jean. 2006. *Understanding Attachment: Parenting, Child Care, and Emotional Development*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Miller, Susan R. 2008. *Secure Attachment*. Chicago, IL: Ounce of Prevention. Available on-line at <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/research/pdfs/SecureAttachment.pdf>
- Newmark, Gerald. 2008. *How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children: Meeting the Five Critical Needs of Children . . . and Parents Too!* Tarzana, CA: NMI Publishers.
- Siegel, Daniel J. 2001. *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and The Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Sroufe, L. Alan, Byron Egeland, Carlson, E., & Collins, W. A. 2005. *The Development of the Person: The Minnesota Study of Risk and Adaptation from Birth to Adulthood*. New York: Guilford.
- Wittmer, Donna. *Attachment: What Works?* Nashville, TN: Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Available on-line at [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwb\\_24.pdf](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwb_24.pdf)



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3. Explain what information was least useful to you and any recommendations you would suggest:

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4. What made participating in this experience via audioconference helpful or unhelpful (format, supplemental materials, discussion forum, etc.)? We would be particularly interested in how you used the "Applying the Information" handout provided in the supplemental materials. Please explain:

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5. What topics should future audioconferences address?

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6. How can we make audioconferences more effective learning experiences for you?

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Though **optional**, we would appreciate the following contact information. We may contact you to learn more about your responses so we can continue to develop useful training experiences.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please fax or mail your completed evaluation forms after the audioconference to:

Attn: Amanda Perez  
Fax: (202) 638-0851  
EHS NRC @ ZERO TO THREE  
1225 M Street, NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20037

**Thank you!**