



Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre

Attachment and the Family Worker Role

At Rachel McMillan we believe the theory of attachment describes how adults and children form and develop reciprocal relationships (John Bowlby 1969). With secure attachments children can thrive; without them, children tend to struggle in relationships and learning and have a reduced sense of who they really are. Our understanding of attachment theory is central to our work.

With children feeling securely attached they will be confident to try new things and feel safe to express their emotions and needs. Children need to feel loved and 'held in mind' and very young infants need to be held physically. We no longer work with babies in the nursery but the principles of attachment must be understood for all young children and are particularly important to consider when helping new families settle into the nursery and children's centre.

In the nursery, our Family Worker system allows practitioners to work closely with a small number of children and families to give reassurance that children feel safe and cared for. Through developing a relationship with the mums, dads and carers the key person aims to ensure each child's needs are understood, respected and supported.

The Family Worker 'tunes in' to each child and responds with knowledge and understanding. This is achieved by noticing, playing and supporting learning, without assumptions and in a meaningful way, with each child.

The Family Worker will make a home visit to see the child in their most familiar environment first. They are responsible for observing, assessing, planning and providing for each child's learning. They will advocate for the child throughout their time with them and keep the child in mind even when they are not together. The Family Worker will build up a relationship of trust and reciprocity with the family as well, so the child is secure in the knowledge that important adults in his or her life are working together and value each other.