

Summary: tips for completion of checklist

- It is recommended that this checklist is not used with children under two years of age, or at a developmental stage which is under two years.
- It may be helpful to have a child in mind who is of similar age and developmental stage when making observations of a child. This will provide a useful guide for the observer with regard to a typical child, that is, a child who would be recorded in the central column on the checklist. The observed child can then be compared to this 'typical child'.
- If a child is new to the setting, the key person may be advised to wait a month to ensure that the child has had a chance to settle into the setting and that the staff are familiar with the child.
- Ideally the key person or a practitioner who knows the child well will complete the checklist. These observations can be part of the ongoing observations being made of the child. This member of staff may also need time to make additional observations of the child to inform the accurate completion of the checklist.
- Although the checklist assists the observer to make a structured observation, be careful not to simply observe the child as a 'snapshot'. It is more helpful if the checklist is used as a reflective tool. Think about a typical day for the child in the setting while going through each section.
- Look at each row as a whole question, with the central column as the age typical indicator.
- The question offers contrasting examples of behaviour. Don't worry if the child demonstrates behaviour at both ends of the row. Simply tick both.
- It's useful to write some examples of behaviours, or triggers if known, in the comments space. This can be used later to identify targets for an action plan or individual education plan.

Summary: developing support

Reasons for using the checklist

- Concerns about behaviour.
- Concerns about child who is not achieving or managing socially.
- Baseline observation to compare child to over time.
- Desire to raise awareness of needs of child.
- Desire to monitor child through period of change or transition.

Collecting contextual information

- Background, early experience and current functioning.
- Knowledge and observations of child in setting.
- Knowledge about the impact of parenting and attachment difficulties.

Interpreting checklist

- Look at pattern of ticks.
- Consider ticks at extreme, each side and in middle.
- Use this to build up a profile of the child.
- Relate to avoidant, ambivalent and controlling patterns of relating.
- What is emotional age of the child?
- Does the child feel safe or unsafe?
- Is the child fitting in with classroom expectations?
- Are there any observable triggers for the child's behaviours?
- Use notes to accompany checklist for extra guidance.
- Think about meaning underlying behaviours.
- Relate to background information.

Developing an action plan

- Support an action plan with an individual education plan or provision map.
- Identify targets to increase social and emotional support.
- Develop interventions to meet targets.
- Plan how interventions will be reviewed.
- Plan further periods of observation.

- Revise action plan.
- Consider further action; placing child on Code of Practice, involving other services, securing additional funding.

Implementing the action plan

- Identify key person and support to build a relationship with child.
 - Implement level of support needed for child.
 - Implement strategies and monitor progress with these.
 - Stay curious about the child and wonder aloud.
 - Continue to support child who becomes more attention-needing.
 - Notice when there are changes for the child outside of the setting.
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Summary: what do children with attachment difficulties need?

Safety

- Until children feel safe, they will not be able to derive positive benefit from being in the educational environment.
- Establish a safe environment within which the child can start to feel secure.
- Provide clear structure, boundaries and routine in a relaxing environment.
- Recognize the fear and anxiety that lie beneath behaviour so that the child can be appropriately supported.
- Set the emotional tone, providing opportunities to co-regulate the child's escalating arousal.
- Reduce stimulation and provide opportunities for rest and relaxation.
- Support during times of transition during the day.

Building a relationship

- Children need relationships in order to feel safe.
- A key person gets to know and understand the child and begins engaging the child in the relationship, helping the child to feel safe enough to trust and respond.
- The key person will know the child well enough to notice distorted as well as direct requests for help.
- The key person will be aware of conditions that might throw the child, stepping in early to prevent escalating arousal.
- This key relationship will support emotional regulation, and help the child when feelings of shame or anger threaten to overwhelm.
- The key person can also act as advocate or champion for the child.
- An attitude of curiosity and reflection will allow the key person to stay in tune with the ongoing needs of the child, accepting the feelings that are leading to difficult behaviour and providing empathy and support for complex emotions.

Emotional development

- Need to meet the emotional needs of children when meeting social and learning needs.
- Children with attachment difficulties are likely to be emotionally immature and to have only fragile control of emotional arousal, whether caused by excitement or anxiety.
- Co-regulation is an important part of supporting children whether or not they appear dysregulated.

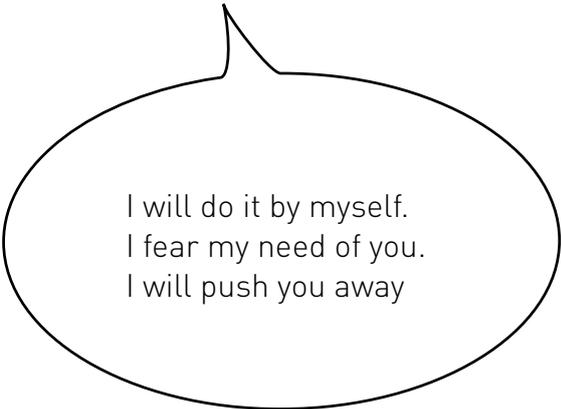
- Children who have learnt to inhibit emotion through dissociative processes may also lack these essential regulation skills.
- Children will not learn to recognize their own or the feelings of others until they have experienced a sensitive, regulating relationship.
- Experience of emotional regulation comes before understanding.
- Attune to the child to recognize and support feelings however these are displayed.
- Step in and provide co-regulation of emotion as required.

Empathy and discipline

- Empathy is an important precursor to discipline. Discipline with empathy and not anger, e.g. 'I know it is really hard for you not to take my things when you are angry with me, but remember that you now have to ...'
 - Learning to follow rules; to understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour arises out of the experience of an empathic, attuned relationship.
 - As the adult comforts and helps the child regulate the feelings of shame, the child is learning what is socially acceptable.
 - Children with attachment difficulties are likely to be emotionally young.
 - Children will need limited and simplified choices and consequences, and help to understand cause and effect.
 - Provide explicit rules with predictable and logical consequences for unacceptable behaviour in a calm and non-confrontational way.
 - Support understanding of behaviour and its consequences and the impact of themselves on others and others on themselves.
 - Avoid getting pulled into confrontation and anger.
 - By providing an appropriate time for the child to feel in control the child will be supported to trust in and enjoy the adult being in charge.
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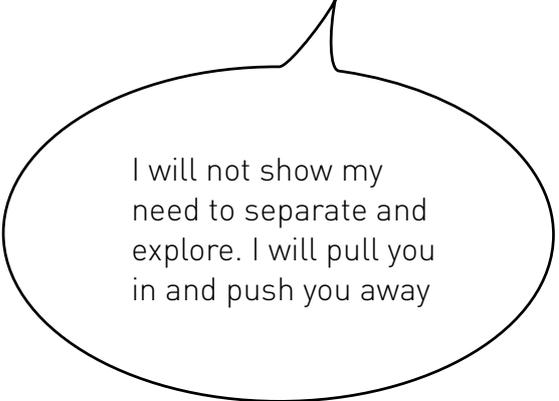
Summary: insecure avoidant attachment pattern of relating

Insecure avoidant profile	Interventions
<p>Attachment pattern develops out of a relationship with a parent who is distant and rejecting</p> <p>These children need help to focus on and express their feelings</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn and quiet • Rely on knowledge and ignore feelings to guide behaviours • Generally appear more self-reliant and independent than expected for their age • Reluctant to turn to adults when they need help • Distress is denied or not communicated • May try to take care of the adult • Can appear happy or settled much of the time • If stressed, may show a sudden and apparently inexplicable tantrum which is quickly over • Relatively isolated as they lack emotional engagement with other children or with adults • Avoid intimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find opportunities to nurture • Encourage accepting adult taking care of hurts, however minor • Help to feel good about themselves and to cope with not being the best, and sometimes getting things wrong • Organise small groups as the child may find this easier • Support in coping with the proximity of the adult • Arrange for older children to be buddies for younger children • Allow some choice in content of play and activities • Gradually build child's ability to accept help • Help the child to experience being thought about and held in mind. <i>'I thought about you this weekend when ...'</i>

Insecure avoidant profile	Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May appear more focused on play than on people • Resistant to help from the adult but also lack confidence in their own ability • Focus more on what they can't do rather than what they can do • Fear of failure • Act with indifference to new situations • Can show limited use of creativity and imagination • Likely to be underachievers • Limited use of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure games with clear rules • Plan clear, structured tasks with all your materials to hand • Use questions which are factual and precise • Use sorting objects and building structures • Use TV, films and videos to describe characters' emotions • Give concrete structured activities • If possible use the child's own experience rather than abstract • Plan activities involving swinging, rolling, spinning – these can be extremely helpful in helping to increase low arousal • Initially avoid games that are about winning and losing but focus on games that are simply about having fun
Expressed need	Hidden need
 <p data-bbox="316 1464 619 1585">I will do it by myself. I fear my need of you. I will push you away</p>	 <p data-bbox="967 1464 1267 1585">I will not show my need for comfort and protection</p>

Summary: insecure ambivalent attachment pattern of relating

Insecure ambivalent profile	Interventions
<p>Attachment pattern develops out of a relationship with a parent who is inconsistent and unpredictable</p> <p>These children need lots of attention, support and nurturing while also being encouraged to cope with short periods without your constant attention</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to make their presence known • Preoccupied with relationships, alert to the availability of others • Appear attention-needing, highly dependent • Overly focused on the relationship with the adults at the expense of play • Find it difficult to settle by themselves or with groups of children • Sometimes talk excessively, or act as 'class clown' in order to maintain the focus of adult attention • Concentrating and focusing on play is difficult as they remain hypervigilant to what the adults are doing and are easily distracted • Very focused on feelings • Find it difficult to attend to the rules and structure of the setting • Find it difficult to follow rules and to learn from consequences • Poor understanding of cause and effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide highly predictable, structured routines • Use visual timetables • Differentiate tasks into small steps • Encourage turn-taking to help achieve some independence in activities • Use a sand timer to help calm anxieties during short timed independent tasks • Provide a special transitional object to take the place of key adult for a short while. <i>'Please look after this for me for a while'</i> • Notice the child frequently during the day. Use comments to let child know you are thinking about him or her • Provide reliable and consistent adult support • Gradually increase separation • Don't reduce these supports too quickly • Allow the child to develop more independence slowly • Use stories around issues of separation, identity and independence

Insecure ambivalent profile	Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely on feelings rather than knowledge to guide their behaviour • Keep others involved in relationships through coercive behaviours. Seen as manipulative • Can escalate confrontation in order to hold the attention of others • View the adult as either all good or all bad, and may oscillate between these depending on their immediate feeling • Find it hard to maintain friendships and can be clingy and possessive • Oversensitive to signs of rejection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support understanding of their behaviour and the predictable consequences. <i>'When I do this, this happens; when you do this, this happens'</i> • Pay special attention to transition times • Plan beginnings, separations, endings • Support the anxiety of the unknown • Support them in regulating strong emotions and in calming down so that they can learn how to calm themselves down • Plan calming and regulating activities involving physical resistance and deep pressure touch to help ground them
Expressed need	Hidden need
 <p>I can't trust in your availability. I need you to attend to me</p>	 <p>I will not show my need to separate and explore. I will pull you in and push you away</p>

Summary: disorganized-controlling attachment pattern of relating

Disorganized-controlling profile	Interventions
<p>Attachment pattern develops out of a relationship within which the parent is frightened of or frightening to the child</p> <p>When children are displaying a lot of controlling, manipulative and aggressive behaviour or overly compliant and withdrawn behaviour, they are signalling that they are feeling anxious, distressed and insecure</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be either quiet and withdrawn or loud and aggressive • Controlling within peer relationships. May want friendships but immaturity impedes this • Anxiety may be expressed as controlling, omnipotent, knowing everything already • Demonstrate a diminished range of emotions, lacking the contentment and joy in activities of other children • Frequently afraid but tend to mask anxiety through more aggressive or powerful behaviours. May provoke, or challenge others to maintain feelings of control • May have poor stress tolerance, detracts from play • Can be highly disruptive in setting • Tend to be anxious and inattentive • May demonstrate highly compulsive or obsessive behaviours which allow them to hold on to a rigid control • May appear compliant but resist attempts to be helped or comforted • Some children portray a pseudomature care-giving role within the setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a period of reduced stress and high security • Reduce excitement and providing calm, predictable and low-key routine • Provide highly safe and secure environments with reliable and predictable routines which helps reduce stress • Help the child to feel physically safe and contained • Use calm non-confrontational responses, empathy • Help the child feel emotionally contained. A 'safe' area/activity/object helps with this • Be aware of the emotional, social and developmental level the child is functioning at and provide activities and experiences that match to this • Plan concrete, mechanical and rhythmic activities to help soothe an over-aroused child, e.g. matching, colouring, sand and water play, sensory play • Use rhythmical physical exercise and music can also help an aroused child calm down

- Others may demonstrate more obsessive preoccupations with being noticed through a combination of aggressive and coy behaviours
- Hypervigilant to what is going on around them, making it difficult to concentrate or attend to play
- Their early brain development has developed over-responsive fight-or-flight reactions, leaving a diminished capacity to concentrate or think
- Although hyper-aroused, some cope with excessive feelings of stress by dissociating – appearing ‘switched-off’
- Strong feelings are overwhelming
- May find it hard to understand, distinguish or control emotions in themselves or others
- Immaturity and rigid controlling style of relating to other children can lead to social isolation
- Likely to be underachievers and possibly at a very immature stage of learning
- Struggle in relatively unsupervised settings such as the playground

- Develop safety and or calming routines for when the child is very distressed. *Think about the place (quiet, non-stimulating) and provide time with the key person*
- Wherever possible, give positive comments, whether about behaviour or in terms of play
- Depending on concentration span – engage in short task interspersed with mechanical tasks e.g. computer or ‘safe’ activity in order to calm the brain

Expressed need

Hidden need

I will not need you.
Needing you is dangerous
I must be in control

I can't explore the world. I am too busy ensuring I am safe

Summary: challenges in supporting the emotional needs of children with attachment difficulties

Managing need for dependency versus independence

- Don't be tempted to push the child to be more independent.
- The route to independence is via dependency.
- Understand the emotional age of the child and support at this age.
- Apparent 'pseudomaturity' can mask dependency needs of some children.
- Support the child to accept dependency.
- This can be challenging when it appears counter to the objective of the setting to help children be more independent.

Maintaining high boundaries and high warmth

- All children do best in an atmosphere of authoritative parenting.
- This provides warmth, support for autonomy and appropriate boundaries.
- Boundaries provide consistency, predictability, routines and consequences.
- Warmth provides nurturing support, encouraging autonomy.
- If children are to benefit from consequences and behavioural guidance, they will need support for their emotional insecurity.
- Children with attachment difficulties often have core beliefs in their own badness.
- Without a high degree of warmth from supportive adults, they are much more likely to enter a state of shame.
- Experience of shame tends to cut children off from relationships.

Managing behaviour while supporting emotional development

- The challenging behaviour of the child with complex emotional needs can oppose our expectations and values.
- Behavioural management programmes respond in a way which discourages the inappropriate behaviours and encourages alternative behaviours.
- We provide a 'correction' by rewarding a behaviour we want to increase and provide a negative consequence for a behaviour we want to reduce.
- Emotional development thrives on connection not correction.
- When we connect emotionally to a child, we recognize and understand the emotional experience which has led to the behaviour.

- Children with attachment difficulties are at particular risk of missing out on connection as their difficulties make them distrustful of emotional connection with another.
- When developing support tailored to the emotional needs of the child it is vital that connection precedes correction.

Supporting children with shame-based difficulties

- The experience of shame is part of the socialization process, via breaks in attunement leading to shame and behaviour inhibition.
 - Attunement, breaks and relationship repair are healthy for children.
 - When discipline is harsh, punitive or inconsistent and when relationships are not repaired, children will experience unregulated shame.
 - If the healthy development of guilt does not develop, an emotion which drives us to make amends, the child gets stuck in shame.
 - These children learn to put up a 'shield against the shame', leading to defensive behaviours such as lying, minimizing, blaming others and raging.
 - Too much attention to the behaviours will only increase feelings of shame and thus reinforce the shield.
 - By helping the child to regulate the feelings of shame with empathy and understanding, the shield will weaken, and the behaviours will reduce.
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Summary: working with children with multiple difficulties

Children with generalized learning difficulty

- The risk of attachment difficulties is increased and the subsequent difficulties in attachment and relationships can cause emotional distress, leading to the development of challenging behaviours.
- Children may be less responsive, or less clear, in what they signal, leading to communication difficulties between adult and child.
- Learning difficulties may slow down the process of learning about relationships, and in adjusting to change and new routines.
- They may take longer to respond to the consistent and nurturing care that the educational setting provides.
- It is important to focus on reducing emotional distress, increasing security and building relationships.

Children with autism

- Children need the mental equipment (nature) and experience of other people (nurture) to allow them to experience interpersonal relations with others.
- Many children with autism do develop secure attachments in early life.
- However, it can be more difficult for carers to interpret signals from the children because of their social difficulties, thus risk of attachment difficulty is increased.
- It might be that children with autism are more vulnerable in families where parenting difficulties are already high.
- Children with attachment difficulties are similar to children with autism in responding well to a highly structured environment, with predictability and lots of preparation for change.
- The use of visual calendars and social stories™ can be helpful, whether the emotional difficulties the child is presenting are due to neurodevelopmental or attachment difficulties, or a combination of both.

Children with sensory integration difficulties

- Children with attachment difficulties may have missed out on important experiences, usually occurring during nurturing care, which help the sensory systems to develop and to work in an integrated way.
- Exposure to trauma during pregnancy or early infancy can alter the way the infant's brain develops and how he or she organizes sensory experiences.

- Children who have a history of separation, loss, abuse and neglect are more likely to present with both attachment and sensory processing difficulties.
- Sensory integration is the ability of the central nervous system to organize and process input from different sensory channels to make an adaptive response.
- Children with difficulties in this area are not able to use sensory information easily to plan and carry out actions.
- Everyday experiences are unpleasant or overwhelming, e.g. sitting still.
- These difficulties can have a significant impact on a child's emotional regulation and learning.
- Some children may over-respond (hypersensitivity) or under-respond (hyposensitivity) to certain sensory experiences to a greater or lesser degree.

Children who demonstrate extreme non-compliance and explosive behaviour

- These are difficulties that can arise within the development of attachment difficulties, although at its extreme it is likely to be the result of both genetic and environmental factors. Brain development in this area can be particularly influenced by lack of good early parenting experience.
- These children are developmentally delayed in the skills of flexibility and in being able to tolerate frustration.
- The root of this difficulty is poor executive functioning leading to emotional distress and frustration which is displayed through non-compliant and/or explosive behaviour.
- These children can have difficulties in cognitive shifting; organization and planning; self-regulation; attention and impulse control.
- These children benefit from being supported by a key adult who knows them well.

Children with ADHD

- Faulty executive functioning leads to poor attention span and impulse control, combined with excessive activity levels.
- It is hard to sort out cause from effect with these children, especially when there are known home difficulties for the child.
- Genetic difficulties with activity and attention may contribute to poor early parenting experience.
- Poor early parenting experiences impact on the development of these children leading to or exacerbating the activity and attention difficulties.
- Education environments need to adapt to the difficulties that they are displaying.

- These children benefit from being supported by workers who know them well, with opportunities to get outside and 'run off steam'.
 - Rough and tumble play can be beneficial for these children, improving their ability to focus and concentrate.
 - Appropriately supervised time outside can help the child to be more successful with indoor activities.
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Summary: insecure attachment patterns

Insecure avoidant pattern

Carer ↔ Child

- Distant and rejecting.
- Finds it difficult to cope with the child's emotional needs.

Child ↔ Adult

- Withdrawn or quiet.
- More self-reliant than peers of same age.
- Less likely to turn to parent or teacher for support and help.
- Can appear isolated, or friendships lack depth.
- Apparent indifference to uncertainty in new situations.
- Finds physical closeness threatening.
- Inexplicable tantrums or outbursts – appear from nowhere, which can be quickly be over.
- More likely to be focused on 'doing' than relationships with people.

Insecure ambivalent pattern

Carer ↔ Child

- Carer will sometimes meet the child's needs depending on their own mood. Therefore, unpredictably available.

Child ↔ Adult

- High level of anxiety and uncertainty.
- Attention-needing.
- Hypervigilant to what adults are doing.
- May talk excessively, or act as a 'clown' in order to keep adult's attention.
- Accept negative or positive attention from adults.
- Difficulties attempting the task if unsupported.
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing.
- Poor understanding of cause and effect.

- May present as highly articulate but this does not correlate with achievement levels.

Disorganized/disorientated and controlling attachment pattern

Carer ↔ Child

- Parent is frightened of or frightening to the child.
- May be because they were frightened as a child so become unresponsive when their child needs them the most.
- May be overtly frightening to the child by exposing them to family violence, odd behaviour or harsh discipline. May be abusive or neglectful.

Child ↔ Adult

- Sees the parent as both the potential source of comfort and terror – ‘I need you, but you frighten me.’
 - May react to unseen triggers.
 - Very controlling in their relationships.
 - May be hyper-aroused or dissociated for much of the time.
 - Their early brain development has developed over-responsive fight-or-flight reactions, leaving a diminished capacity to concentrate or think.
 - May be unable to accept being taught, and/or unable to ‘permit’ others to know more than they do as this triggers overwhelming feelings of humiliation.
 - Struggle in relatively unsupervised settings such as in the playground.
-