**[Mary Holwell]:** So, Andi, one of the things that you have written about is that there are challenges promoting early learning for babies, and it's very complex and grounded in deeply held beliefs about these very young children. You described one of these beliefs as, I, and this is a quotation, "As a stronghold of classic ideas about baby care and routines." Can you tell us a little bit more about that? What does it really mean?

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** Yeah. Well, I guess let’s start with this idea of a stronghold of classic ideas. And so, when I think of that, I think about theory straight away and in relation to babies, I think Attachment Theory is a big one. And what I have certainly encouraged students to do is to... Oh, I forgot to ask Steph to maybe put up the slides, slide three is where we are at. So, just being critical and knowing that some of the knowledge that we draw on is quite dated in ways. When I help people know how long Parten's stages of play, how long ago they were written, that's almost a hundred years ago now. And so, I think it's really important. So, for example, with Attachment Theory, it's grounded in Psychoanalytic Theory and Bowlby's observations of all orphaned and hospitalized children after World War II.

So, it has a very particular history. And then when we think about Bowlby and Ainsworth and their research that was conducted with middle to upper class, possibly, probably, I haven't looked at the data exactly, but there'd be certain children in Baltimore actually, at least 50 years ago, who are privileged enough to first of all be invited, and have the capacity to be a part of that research. So, I guess even thinking of that from a socio-cultural perspective, a contemporary world, and also knowing that it's tied, it's a bit grounded in this idea of a child's tie to the mother. And it's about dyadic attachment where it's one-on-one. If we think about that through the lens of contemporary world, we know that not all children have just mothers at home, and not all children, given how society has changed. It's not just the mother that is the primary caregiver. Thinking about that from a cultural perspective, I think what we need to do is have some sophistication in how we apply our thinking and how we use it.

And thinking of the concept of an attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can explore, I think two things that I've noticed is that quite often people use attachment theory, by saying, ‘oh they are really attached to that educator’. But...And that means sitting on their lap and feeling really cuddling, and nice, and warm. But a part of Attachment Theory is exploring from that secure base. I think also thinking about this idea of a dyadic attachment that it's one-on-one. I think in doing that, we limit our possibilities to see other ways of looking at attachment and Indigenous communities are really good examples where they start with and come from multiple attachments, where a lot of people, family members, are with that baby and looking after that baby, and also this idea of being securely attached to the mother versus being securely attached to place and space.

And maybe, I did some research work which I was really lucky to be a part of, where I was analyzing data from an Indigenous setting. And I got such a strong sense that these babies were really secure and maybe attached to country. And I didn't pose that, but I may have [inaudible], in, you know when you're really sure about Attachment Theory, I guess, it limits alternative possibilities. And that's not to say we throw it out but… sorry, go on.

**[Mary Holwell]:** No, no, I didn't mean to interrupt you there Andi, I forgot that I was on mute, I was going uh-huh, uh-huh.

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** There is more of, I think attached to that is the idea...And when you think about baby care and routines, I think it's really common to think about primary caregiving, which is also connected with Attachment Theory. And I think it's also often misused in practice. And so I draw on the work of Tony Christie in New Zealand who outlined so beautifully that primary caregiving is best done in a team. It's not about just one person with that one child only. And I think that notion of primary attachment, again, as part of the dyad, the one-on-one relationship with the mother, which is where it comes from, precludes so many other possibilities and realities. And I think one of the things about multiple attachment in the literature I've looked at is that it actually leads to resilience and flexibility in children.

So I think that's a really helpful and important kind of, I think we need to be, you know, critique… And I, whenever I use critical today, it's not about criticizing, it's just about really unpacking it and seeing, does it still count? Does it still, is it still relevant in our contexts? And then the last point I think, is that learning and care routines are separate. If we remember that babies are learning all the time, they are learning during care routines and through, within the care and the routine. So, it's not all about romantic notions of that being a precious time, and I'll bring the idea of romance up again. I think there's a lot of romance around babies and baby care. And I think it ties into the discourses of innocent children and our roles as caregivers, as mothers. So those are those maternalist discourses where a lot of early childhood education has come from because it used to be maybe 50 years ago, but more probably, babies were at home with their mothers, again because of what society looked like.

So I'll go back to that idea of the romantic notion of precious time to develop our relationships in trusting ways. I see that so much when I see and hear stuff around care routines, and yes, that's truly important, but we can also be practicing counting, and singing, and wordplay, and early literacy by naming things as you do them. So I think it is important to know these classic beliefs and then kind of bring them to today and now and build on in ways that benefit children.

**[Mary Holwell]:** I think there are a couple of things there that will be very interesting for us to unpack a little bit more as we go along. I think particularly that idea of resilience that you spoke about that multiple caregivers creates or allows that concept of resiliency to be built and developed in young children, I think is a very interesting concept and has a lot to offer us in the world today where we know that there is some anxiety at the moment in particular, around what's happening across the world globally.

And what are the implications there and how can we support young children to be increasingly resilient? And that idea of combined learning and routine times, that they don't exist in isolation, that learning does happen in and alongside routine times, I think is something that is really important for our educators to grasp and understand, because I often think about the routines with very young children as being a time where it is that child focusing very much on you because you are there delivering something that's really important to them, whether it be dry nappy, food, drink, whatever. And it's a time when you have them really well focused on you and a time for great deal of engagement to occur when you can enrich whatever is going on in so many ways as you spoke to. So I think there's.

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** And what, what’s coming to me as you say that, is that it's when you do engage in enriching ways, then the relationship is going to happen anyway So, that's how the relationship develops.

**[Mary Holwell]:** It starts to become self-perpetuating in a sense, your response is part of that serve and return because you've committed something and the child gives something back. And then you give something again.

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** And it actually adds to security because when you think about how babies learn, they come to expect that. And that is... There's something safe about that. So, you can sing that song that you sang yesterday, and the day before, because when we repeat, that's how they learn. That's so. And they come to feel safe within that.

**[Mary Holwell]:** I think that ties in really nicely back to the idea that you expressed early in that, that answer Andi, about exploring from the place of security. So when the child has that relationship in those routine times that you might be delivering and they're feeling comfortable and engaging with you there, then they can begin to give you more than they might have given you at other times. It's that illustration of exploring from the place of security that I think was very apparent in that.

So. thanks very much.

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