

Contents



1. Cover page



2. Ai declaration



3. Isaac – The Case study



4. Introduction to Bowlby's Attachment Theory



5. Four Pillars of Bowlby's Attachment Hypothesis



6. Nature, Nurture and Postnatal Depression



7. Applying Bowlby's Theory to Isaac



8. Typical Development at Four



9. Early Years Support



10. Multi-agency Working



11. Critical Evaluation of Bowlby's Attachment Theory



12. Conclusion



13. References



Cover Page

MODULE NAME: LCHS4010 – Psychology in Health and Social Care

Certificate of Higher Education Skills for the Workplace (Health & Social Care)

STUDENT NAME : Gillian Gibbs

STUDENT NUMBER: 2508019

LECTURER NAME: Brian Mashumba

AI DECLARATION

AI tools, including ChatGPT, were used only to help organise and design this presentation. All academic ideas, analysis, application of Bowlby's theory, and conclusions are my own work. All sources were independently checked and referenced. AI supported the presentation process but did not replace my learning or judgement.

Understanding Isaac's Early development through Bowlby's Attachment Theory

Isaac – The Case study



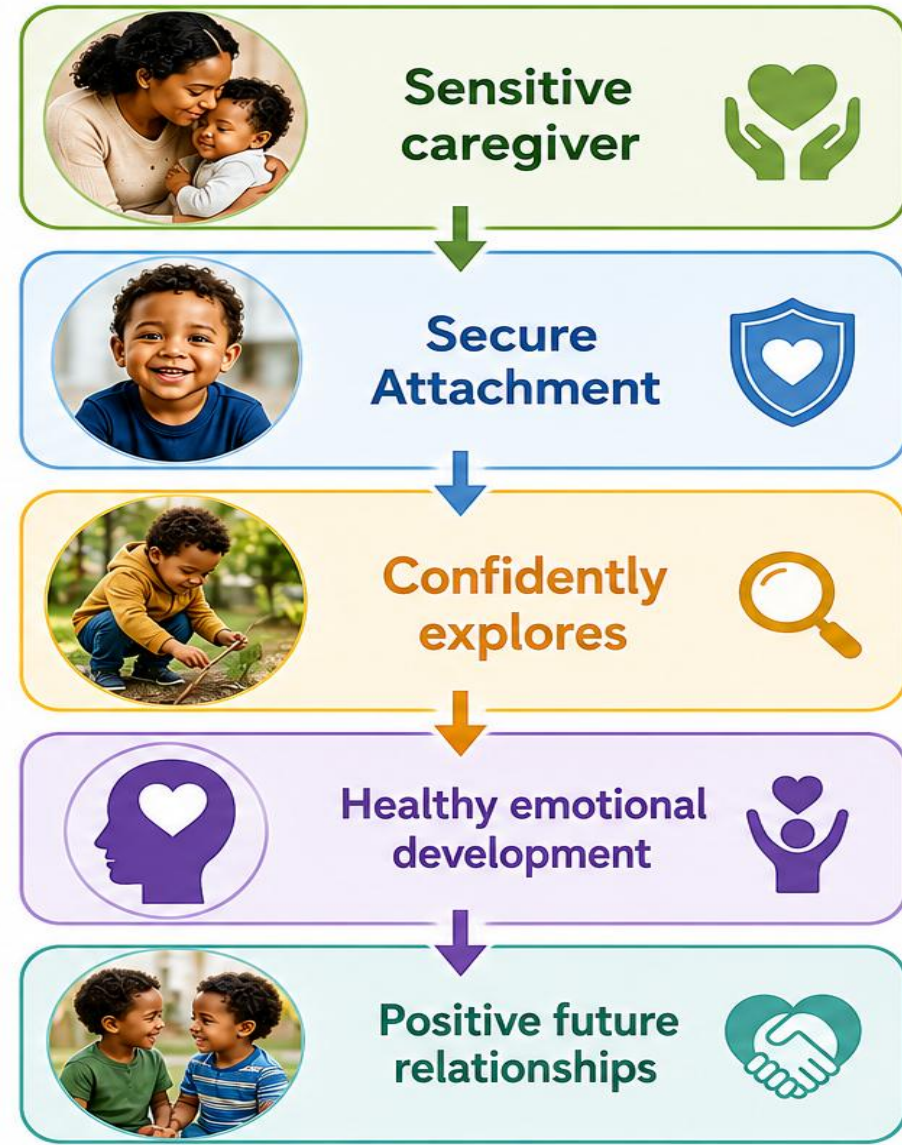
INTRODUCTION TO Bowlby's Attachment Theory

Key Concepts

- Attachment is an innate survival system.
- Secure attachment promotes healthy emotional, social and cognitive development.
- A caregiver provides a **Secure Base** from which children confidently explore.
- Early experiences form an **Internal Working Model** of relationships.
- Early attachment influences later wellbeing throughout life.



(Bowlby, 1969/1982; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2023)



Four Pillars of Bowlby's Attachment Hypothesis

Pillar	Importance for Development
Attachment Behaviour	Promotes protection and survival through proximity-seeking behaviours.
Secure Base	Encourages confidence, exploration and independence.
Internal Working Model	Shapes children's expectations of themselves and others.
Attachment Stages	Attachment develops progressively from birth to early childhood.



(Bowlby, 1969/1982; Ainsworth, 1989)

Nature, Nurture and Postnatal Depression

Nature and Nurture in Isaac's Development

Nature (Biological Factors)

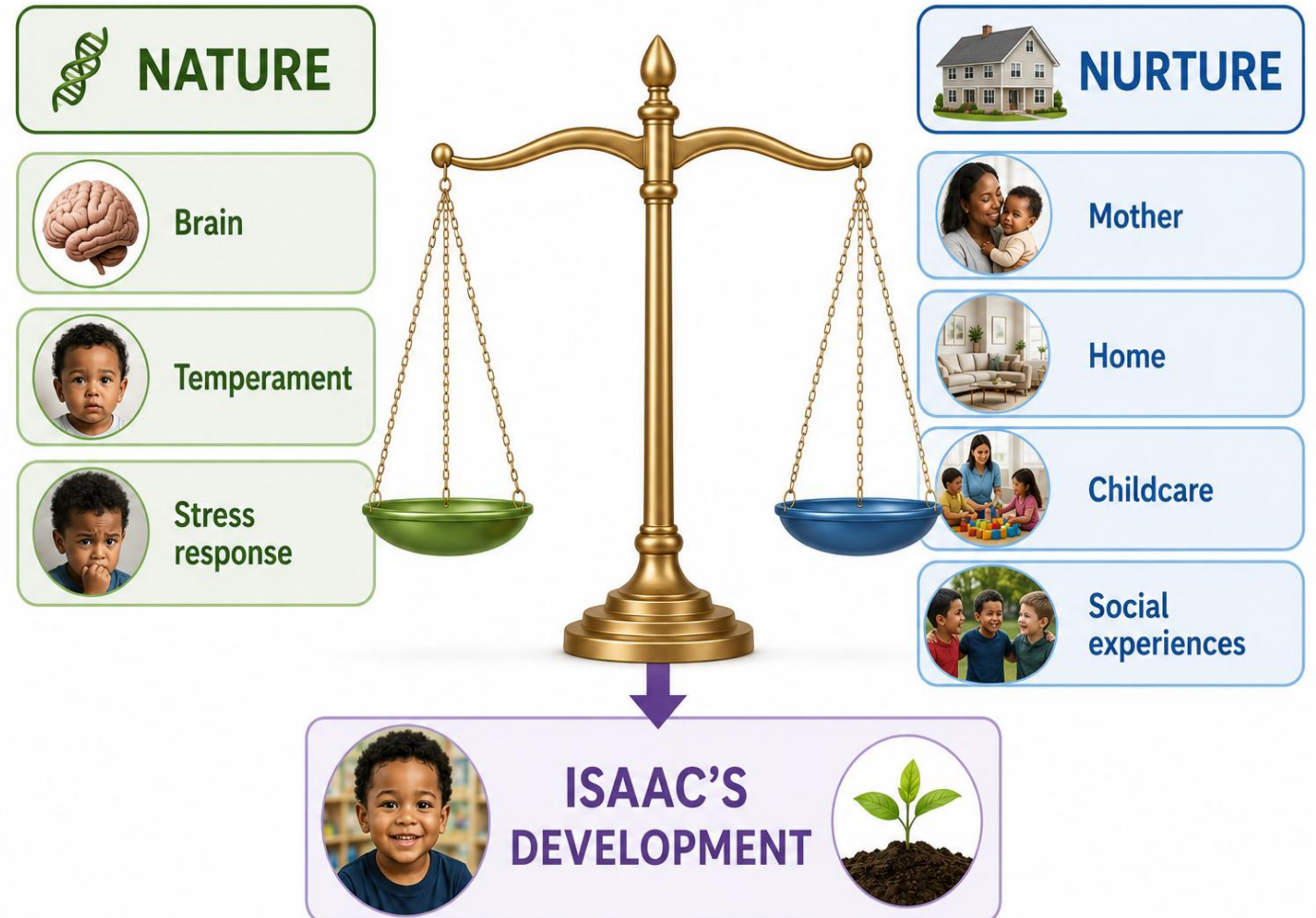
- The brain develops rapidly during the first three years.
- Temperament influences emotional responses.
- Early stress affects emotional regulation.

Nurture (Environmental Factors)

- Maternal postnatal depression
- Disrupted childcare
- Recent house move
- Limited opportunities for social interaction

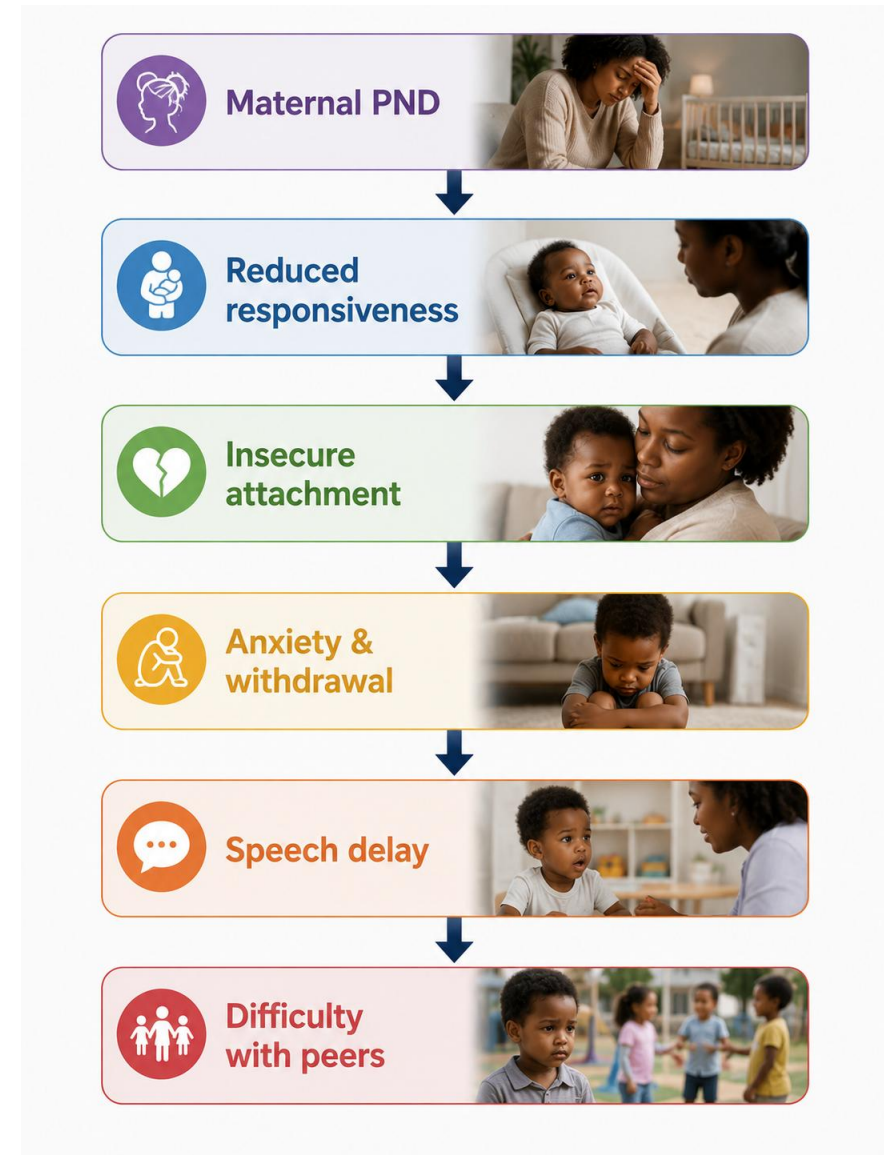
Impact on Isaac

- Reduced secure attachment
- Delayed language development
- Increased anxiety
- Withdrawal from peers
- *(NICE, 2026; NHS, 2026; Bowlby, 1969/1982)*



Applying Bowlby's Theory to Isaac

Observed Behaviour	Bowlby's Explanation
Separation anxiety	Insecure attachment due to inconsistent caregiving
Clinginess	Child seeks reassurance from attachment figure
Withdrawal	Limited confidence to explore independently
Language delay	Reduced interaction and stimulation
Difficulty joining group play	Internal Working Model influences trust in others



(Bowlby, 1973; Bowlby, 1980; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2023)

Typical Development at Four

Isaac's development suggests delays in social, emotional and communication skills, consistent with the effects of insecure attachment.

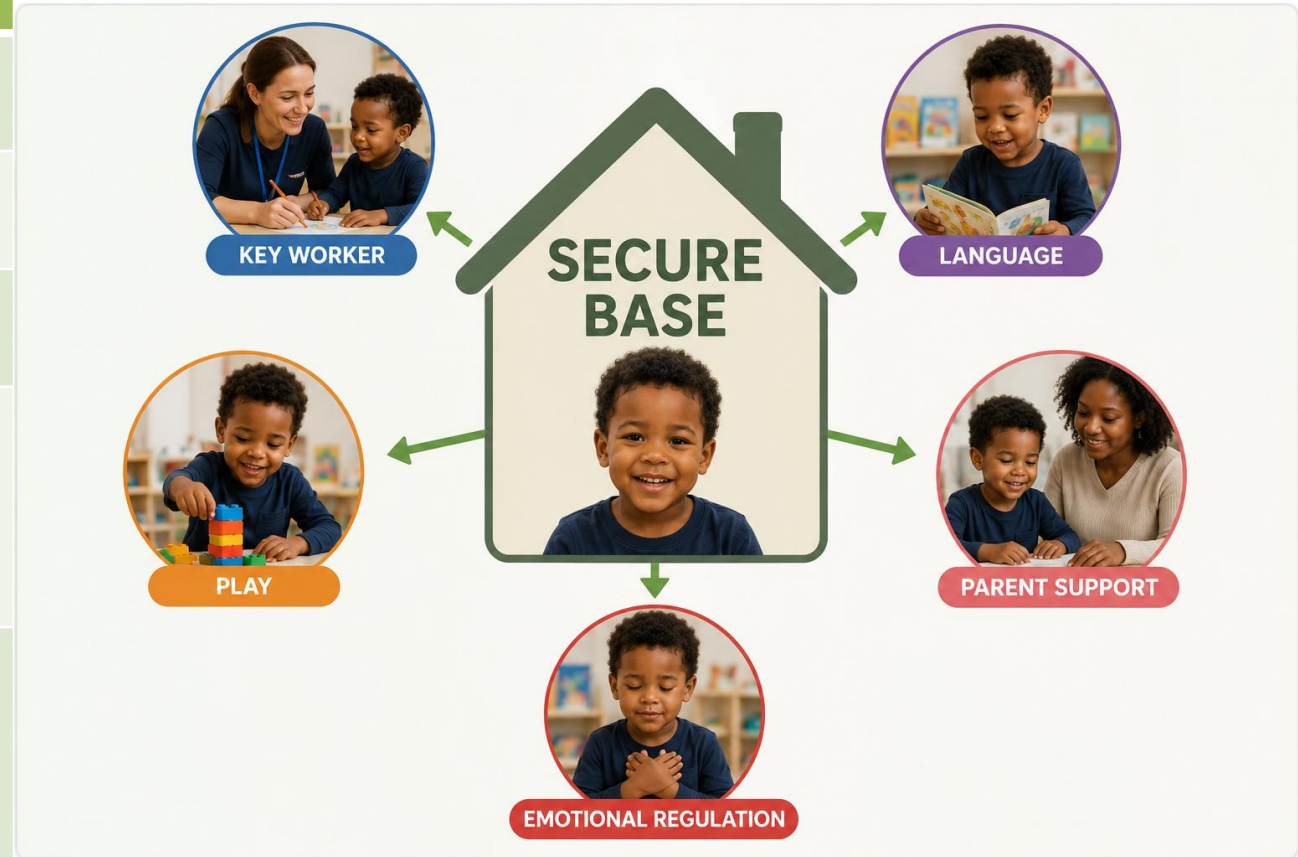
(Meggitt, 2015; Tassoni and Burnham, 2025)

Typical Development (4 years)	Isaac's Presentation
Plays confidently with peers	Withdrawn during free play
Speaks in clear, longer sentences	Delayed language development
Separates from parent with reassurance	Distressed when separated from mother
Regulates emotions with support	Clingy and anxious
Explores independently	Reluctant to join activities



Early Years Support

Area	Intervention
Emotional wellbeing	Consistent key worker and predictable routines
Communication	Language-rich play and daily story sessions
Social skills	Small-group and cooperative play activities
Parent support	Child-led play at home and PND support services
Attachment	Transitional object and calm, consistent drop-off routine



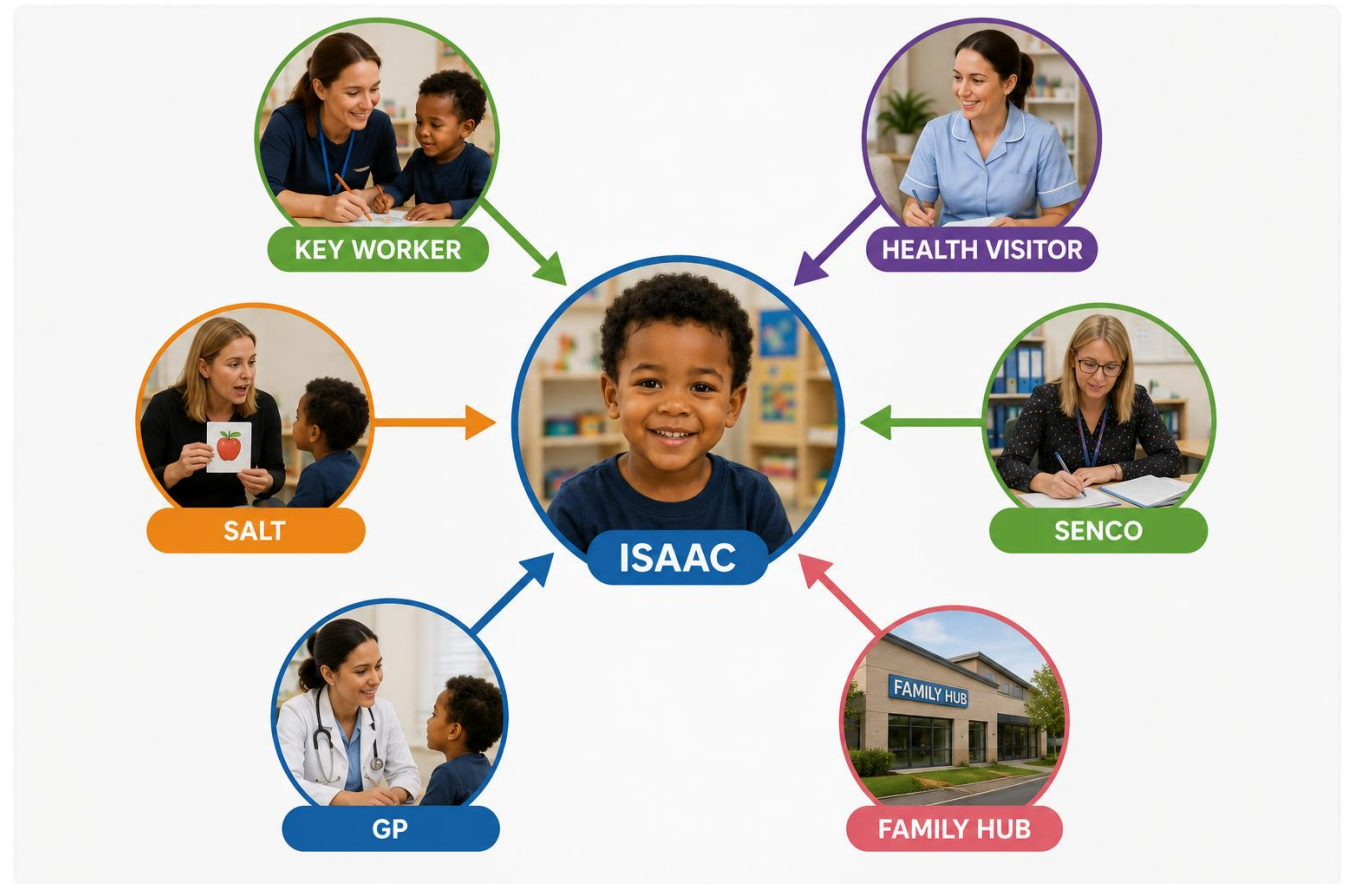
Expected Outcomes

- ✓ Increased confidence
- ✓ Improved communication
- ✓ Better emotional regulation
- ✓ Stronger peer relationships

(Department for Education, 2026; NICE, 2026)

Multi-agency Working

Professional	Role
Key Worker	Daily emotional support and monitoring
SENCO	Assess learning and communication needs
Speech & Language Therapist	Language assessment and intervention
Health Visitor	Monitor family wellbeing and parenting support
GP / Perinatal Mental Health Team	Ongoing support for mother's postnatal depression
Family Hub	Parenting programmes and community support



Review progress every 6–8 weeks using observations and developmental assessments
(Department for Education, 2026; NICE, 2026, Wright et al., 2023)

Critical Evaluation of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

Strengths	Limitations
✓ Highlights the importance of early relationships	✗ Overemphasises one primary attachment (monotropy)
✓ Influenced Early Years practice and safeguarding	✗ Limited consideration of fathers and multiple caregivers
✓ Supported by research on secure attachment and emotional development	✗ Based largely on Western family structures
✓ Helps identify children needing early intervention	✗ Underestimates children's resilience and capacity for change



Despite its limitations, Bowlby's theory remains highly relevant for understanding children's emotional development and planning early intervention within health and social care

(Ainsworth, 1989; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2023).

Conclusion

- **Bowlby's Attachment Theory** provides a valuable framework for understanding Isaac's development.
- Isaac's experiences of **postnatal depression, disrupted childcare and limited social interaction** have affected his emotional, social and language development.
- A **secure attachment**, combined with **early intervention** and **multi-agency support**, can improve developmental outcomes.
- Early Years practitioners play a crucial role in helping children build confidence, resilience and secure relationships.

"Early relationships do not determine a child's future, but they provide the foundation from which positive change can grow."



References

Ainsworth, M.D.S. (1989) 'Attachments beyond infancy', *American Psychologist*, 44(4), pp. 709–716. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.4.709> (Accessed: 2 July 2026).

Bowlby, J. (1969/1982) *Attachment and Loss. Vol. 1: Attachment*. 2nd edn. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Bowlby, J. (1973) *Attachment and Loss. Vol. 2: Separation: Anxiety and Anger*. London: Hogarth Press.

Bowlby, J. (1980) *Attachment and Loss. Vol. 3: Loss: Sadness and Depression*. London: Hogarth Press.

Department for Education (2026) *Help for early years providers: Relationships*. Available at: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/areas-of-learning/personal-social-and-emotional-development/relationships> (Accessed: 9 July 2026). ([Help for Early Years Providers](#))

Meggitt, C. (2015) *Introduction to Early Years Education and Care: CACHE Level 2*. London: Hodder Education.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (2026) *Antenatal and postnatal mental health: Clinical management and service guidance*. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg192> (Accessed : 8 July 2026).

NHS (2026) *Postnatal depression*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/> (Accessed: 8 July 2026).

O'Shaughnessy, R., Berry, K., Dallos, R. and Bateson, K. (2023) *Attachment Theory: The Basics*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge.

Tassoni, P. and Burnham, L. (2025) *Early Years Practitioner: Level 2 Technical Occupational Entry for the Early Years Practitioner (Diploma)*. London: Hodder Education.

Wright, B., Fearon, P., Garside, M., Barlow, J., Bennett, C., Holmes, J., Pickles, A. and Hyde, C. (2023) *Routinely used interventions to improve attachment in infants and young children: A national survey and two systematic reviews*. *Health Technology Assessment*, 27(2), pp. 1–168.