

Red Flags in Infant/Toddler – Caregiver Relationships

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Attention and concentration difficulties, oppositional, defiant behavior, behavioral control problems, anxiety and withdrawal all could be relationship-specific and NOT displayed when the child is in a different context or with a different caregiver

Ask, “Do these happen only with a particular caregiver present, and not at other times?” It is possible that child may have a relationship disturbance & one of the above

- Does the child seem to prefer the caregiver or is there no special preference?
 - Going to caregiver for food is not necessarily a sign of secure attachment
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- Does the child go to the caregiver for comfort when the child is hurt or upset?
 - Does child typically stay where she is or does she go to caregiver?
 - Does she turn away from caregiver instead of asking for comfort?
 - Does child go to strangers for comfort?
- Is the child easily comforted, does he take a while to calm down, or does he fail to be soothed?
- Does the child talk or interact back and forth with the caregiver? Be concerned if more often than not the child:
 - tends not to interact and does not respond to sensitive bids for interaction from caregiver
 - does not share interesting bits of the day with the caregiver
- Does the child tend to wander off without looking back to the caregiver in unfamiliar situations?
 - Does she wander off but look back or does she stay near the caregiver?
- Does the child tend to approach or walk right up to strangers?
 - Touch strangers or ask to be picked up?
- Does the child seem likely to go off with a stranger?
 - Has she gone off with someone or do you think that she might?
- Does the child try to provoke the caregiver with self-endangering behavior (such as climbing up and jumping off of high places?)
- Does the child seem very afraid of the caregiver?
- Does the child seem to worry about or want to take care of the caregiver, beyond showing typical empathy or helpfulness?