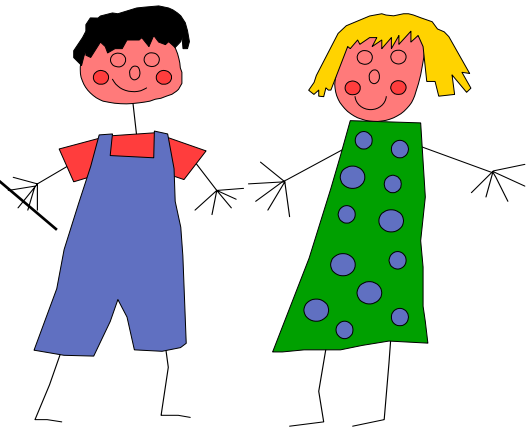




An OAASIS Publication  
for Parents and Professionals

Attachment  
Disorder



# *Attachment Disorder*

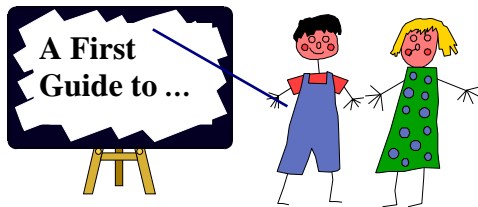
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*Office for Advice, Assistance,  
Support and Information on Special Needs*

*OAASIS is a part of **Cambian Education Services***





## *Attachment Disorder*

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*A First Guide to Attachment Disorder* Price: £4.00

by Caroline Lacey 1997

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OTHER TITLES IN THE SERIES:

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- Complex and Severe Learning Difficulties (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)
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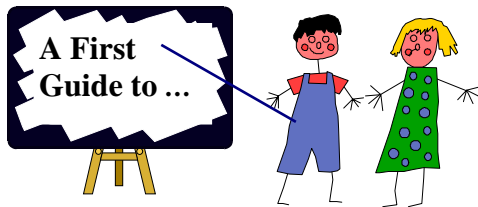
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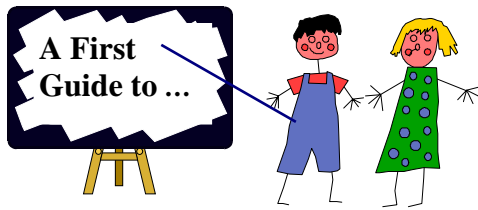


## *Attachment Disorder*

### **About First Guides**

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- **This First Guide** was developed at Grateley House School as part of a range of guides being prepared for and distributed by OAASIS (Office for Advice, Assistance, Support and Information on Special Needs). They are designed to provide a quick and easy reference pack of information on various learning difficulties.
  - **OAASIS** offers:
    - a **telephone Helpline** for advice on matters to do with special education. Ring **01590 622880** usually manned between 10 and 4.30p.m., Monday – Friday.
    - various **publications** including
      - Free Information Sheets on various learning difficulties and other aspects of special education.
      - The *First Guide to ...* series. Other titles are listed on the opposite page.
      - *What is ....?* cards. Small cards describing briefly a disability. Useful for informing others. Cards are available on: ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, Attachment Disorder, Autism, Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Semantic Pragmatic Disorder and Tourette's Syndrome.
      - *Do You Know Someone with Autism?* booklet. Written by a former teacher at The Forum School for the brothers, sisters and classmates of a child with autism.
  - **OAASIS** can be contacted by writing to OAASIS at Brock House, Grigg Lane, Brockenhurst, Hampshire SO42 7RE; sending a fax to 01590 622687; emailing [oaasis@cambiangroup.com](mailto:oaasis@cambiangroup.com) or ringing the Helpline.
  - **Grateley House School** offers residential education (with a waking day curriculum) for young people aged 9-19 years with Asperger Syndrome or other associated syndromes requiring similar care, education and therapeutic interventions for 38 weeks a year. There are some day spaces available for families who live close by. The school is sited in a large country house near Andover, in Hampshire, within its own grounds of several acres.
  - Grateley House School and OAASIS are a part of Cambian Education Services. For further information on the Cambian Education schools and colleges please phone 0800 288 9779.
  - OAASIS welcomes contributions from families, professionals, and individuals who would like to contribute ideas for inclusion in the pack.
  - There may be a small charge for the Guides to cover OAASIS printing and packing costs. See the OAASIS Publications List for a full range of literature available.
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# *Attachment Disorder*

## **Contents**

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## **Contents**

**Basic Introduction to Attachment Disorder**

**Causes of Attachment Disorder**

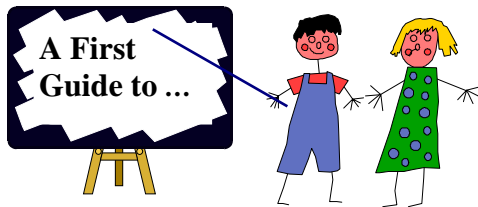
**Common Symptoms: Outline of the child with Attachment Disorder**

**How to Meet the Needs of the Young Person with Attachment Disorder**

**Model: Possible Negative Interactions between Child and Adopters**

**Recommended Reading**

**Other useful OAASIS publications**



# *Attachment Disorder*

## **Basic Introduction**

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**It is well researched** and documented that some children's emotional development is interrupted in their early years. This causes them great problems in forming and maintaining relationships.

In an 'ordinary' family, bonding and attachment happens quite naturally. From this interaction of adult and child comes a sense of trust and security for the child.

### **Human Needs**

Everybody has the same basic needs:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Self fulfilment</b>     | - <u>need</u> to become everything you are capable of becoming                                 |
| <b>Self worth</b>          | - <u>need</u> to feel important, capable, worthy, confident, have recognition, respect         |
| <b>Love and friendship</b> | - <u>need</u> to give and receive love, to belong  |
| <b>Safety</b><br>to        | - <u>need</u> to be safe from threats, treated fairly, to have fun, to feel happy, feel secure |
| <b>Physical</b>            | - <u>need</u> for air, food, shelter, medical care, rest, recreation (survival needs).         |

### **Putting it Together**

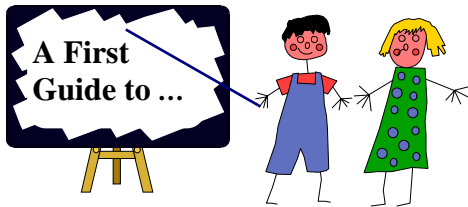
Much of our behaviour is a combination of need, such as eating with a friend. This satisfies the need for food and friendship.

These needs must be satisfied if we are to have a good self-concept and have good relationships with others.

When our needs are met we feel happy and contented.

When they are not met we feel frustrated, angry, sad, confused, hurt, jealous, hateful.

These negative feelings can cause conflict, both within ourselves and with others.



## *Attachment Disorder*

### **The Common Symptoms**

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**Any of the following conditions**, especially if they have happened to a child under 18 months old, put a child at high risk of developing an attachment disorder.

- pre-birth trauma
- sudden separation from primary caretaker (such as illness or death of mother, or the hospitalisation of the child)
- frequent moves and / or placements (such as foster care, moves in and out of the care system)
- undiagnosed and / or painful illness (such as colic or ear infections)
- chronic maternal depression
- teenage mothers with poorly developed parenting skills
- inconsistent or inadequate day care
- neglect
- abuse (physical, emotional, sexual).

### **The Importance of Bonding and Attachment in the First Year**

The Attachment Process:

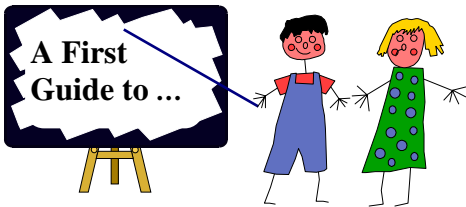
<b>PHASE 1</b>	<b>0 - 3 Months</b>	<b>Initial Attachment</b>
<b>PHASE 2</b>	<b>3 - 6 Months</b>	<b>Attachments Developing</b>
<b>PHASE 3</b>	<b>6 - 9 Months</b>	<b>Clear-cut Attachments</b>
<b>PHASE 4</b>	<b>9 Months +</b>	<b>Multiple Attachments</b>

If the needs of a child are met in a positive way by the adult, this will give the child self esteem and self worth. These are viewed as essential in the first twelve months of a baby's life.

### **Positive Interactions**

Research indicates that attachment aids children to develop

- physically
- emotionally
- socially
- morally



## *Attachment Disorder* The Common Symptoms

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and thus enables them to

- cope with change and stress
- cope with separation and loss
- become independent
- develop future relationships.

A human being who can attach successfully will be able to forge and sustain satisfying human relationships.

**Attachment** - the relationship a child makes with an adult in response to bonding.

**Bonding** - behaviours, indicated by adults: the process by which an adult makes a relationship with a child.

If a child does not experience positive interaction for themselves to his / her needs, he or she will create a negative interactive cycle which will lead to conduct problems. The child's world becomes bleak, cynical and negative. The child creates abnormal attachments.

### **Models**

#### **Positive (normal) attachment:**

##### **CARERS**

... are responsive  
... are available  
... meet the child's needs

##### **CHILD**

... feels worthwhile  
... feels safe  
... feels capable.

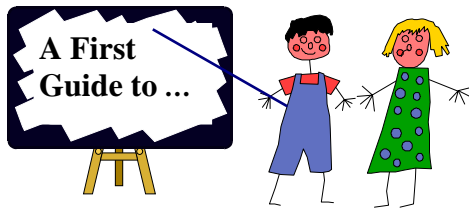
#### **Negative (abnormal) attachment:**

##### **CARERS**

... are unresponsive  
... are unreliable  
... are threatening  
... are dangerous

##### **CHILD**

... feels worthless  
... feels unsafe  
... feels weak  
... feels afraid  
... feels rejected.

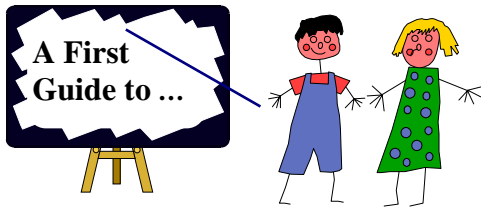


## *Attachment Disorder* **The Common Symptoms**

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### **Children with Attachment Disorder will -**

- be superficially engaging, charming (phoney)
- avoid eye contact
- be indiscriminately affectionate with strangers
- lack the ability to give or receive affection (ie, will not be 'cuddly')
- exhibit extreme control problems - often manifest in devious ways (eg stealing from family; secret solvent abuse, etc)
- be destructive to self and others
- lack of kindness (cruelty) to animals
- display erratic behaviour, tell lies
- have no impulse controls
- lack cause-and-effect thinking
- lack a conscience
- have abnormal eating patterns
- show poor peer relationships
- be pre-occupied with fire, blood and gore
- ask persistent nonsense questions and incessantly chatter
- be inappropriately demanding and clingy
- have abnormal speech patterns
- display passive aggression (provoking anger in others)
- be unable to trust others
- show signs of depression
- exhibit pseudo-maturity
- have low self esteem
- show signs of a guilt complex
- show signs of repressed anger
- sabotage placements such as school, foster family, etc.



# *Attachment Disorder*

## **The Common Symptoms**

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**Please note -**

FEW CHILDREN WITH ATTACHMENT DISORDER WILL EXHIBIT ALL OF THESE SYMPTOMS!!

### **Children with Attachment Disorder will -**

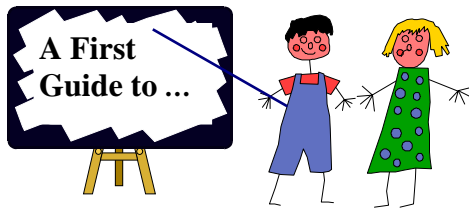
- fail to negotiate with their carers
- never have learnt to identify clearly their own wants, needs, feelings
- fail to understand the thoughts, feelings and needs of others
- perceive themselves as powerful, dangerous
- believe there is no point in expressing feelings, conflicts, opinions.

### **These problems may have the following effects upon the carers -**

- increase carers' reactions even if negative and possibly even if dangerous
- keep carers at a distance physically and emotionally.

### **Children with attachment problems -**

- lack basic trust and have little understanding of 'normal' behaviour.
- Their lack of trust generates in them feelings of aloneness, being different, being rejected and a deep-rooted anger
- They are usually externally well-defended (will put on a facade of being confident and untouchable) but internally they feel bad, at fault and helpless.
- These negative messages are extremely intense.
- Therefore the positive messages the carers wish to give must be equally as intense and powerful.



# *Attachment Disorder*

## **The Specific Needs of Young People with the disorder**

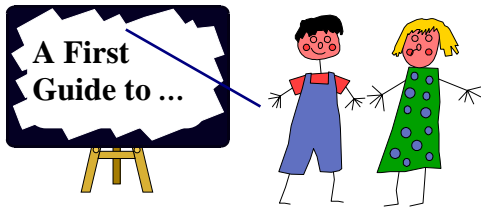
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### **Specific Needs of the Young Person with Attachment Problems**

- to be able to respond positively to a significant other person
- to comply to the basic rules of society
- to comply to reasonable requests
- to have a realistic sense of self
- to learn to be non-confrontational with others
- to accept responsibility for own actions
- to feel valued
- to fit into and accept the family dynamics
- to manage temper / anger appropriately
- to understand the world around him / her
- to understand his / her own wants, needs and feelings
- to have a sense of his / her own identity.

### **Meeting the Needs**

- provide a significant 'other' - a positive role model to whom the young person can relate
- give clear, consistent guidelines and boundaries, but allow some flexibility
- be as honest and truthful as possible, with sensitivity to the young person's feelings
- give calm, measured responses in confrontational situations
- create win / win situations
- mirror the young person's world using role play, video, etc, so that they can see what it feels and sounds like
- always endeavour to let them know it is their behaviour that isn't liked, not them
- tell them what behaviours annoy / irritate, and tell them why. They can't change behaviours they do not recognise as causing problems
- allow your emotions to be seen (anger, frustration, sadness, happiness, etc) appropriately: parents and carers are people too
- confront feelings in an open, honest way and help to build positive relationships
- anticipate their behaviours; let them know you are doing this



## *Attachment Disorder* **Specific Needs**

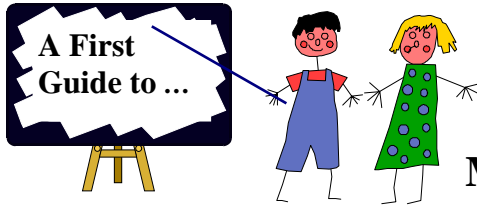
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- have a good working relationship with families, parents, social workers etc
- address the early learning process through psychotherapy, counselling, etc
- listen to the young person: hear what they have to say. But remember, they communicate in more ways than just verbally.
- plan with them for their adult life; help them to understand the attachment process and how they can be positive in the role as adult
- remember that the adult is responsible for helping young people make appropriate, positive attachments
- give the young person a safe, secure environment to express their innermost feelings, fears, hurt, etc.

### **The Young Person will learn -**

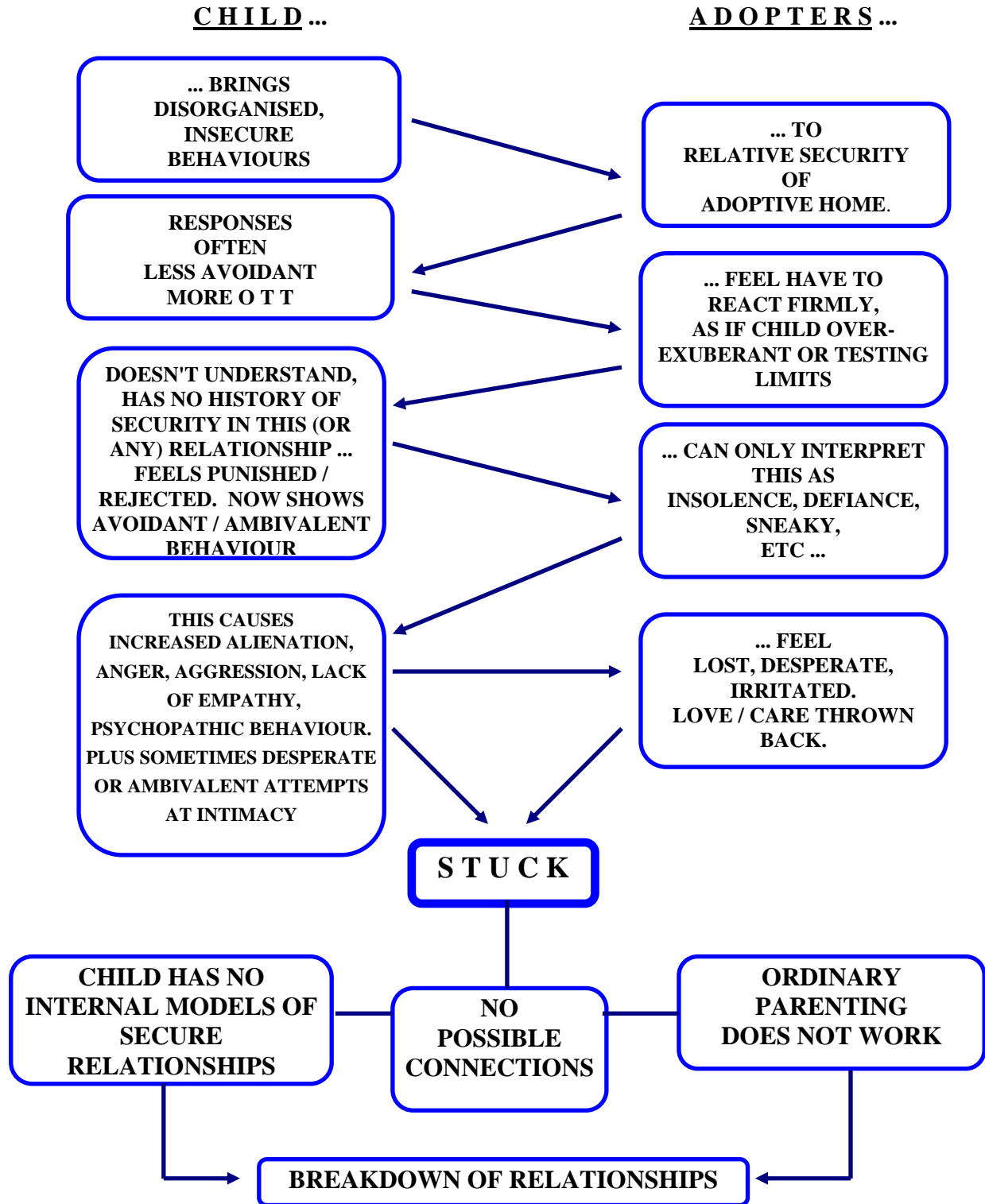
- these adults are not afraid of him / her
- these adults accept him / her as a person
- the world can be safe
- you can trust others
- adults *do* listen.

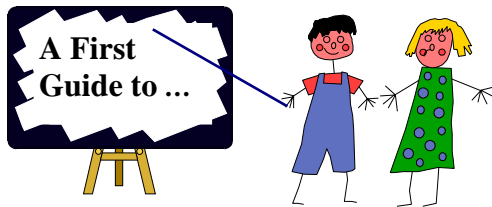
**Attachments can be made, bonding can take place, thus positive relationships can be formed.**



**Model: Possible Negative Interactions**

What can happen between a child and his or her adopters (carers)  
(Fearnley 1996; adapted from Richer 1995)





## *Attachment Disorder* Reading List

### BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Dept of Health, 1993<br>HMSO, London   | Guidance on Permissible Forms of Control in Children's Residential Care  |
| Donnellan, LaVigna,<br>with<br>Negri-Shoultz & Fass bender<br>1988, NY Teachers Coll Press | Progress without Punishment - Effective approaches for Learners<br>Behaviour Problems  |
| LaVigna & Donnellan<br>1986, Irvington, NY   | Alternatives to Punishment: Solving Behaviour Problems with Non-aversive Strategies  |
| Lyon C. 1994<br>The Mental Health<br>Foundation, London                                    | Legal Issues Arising from the Care, Control and Safety of Children With Learning Difficulties who also present Challenging Behaviour |
| Warren B. & Evans I. M<br>(Eds) 1991 OMRDD, New York                                       | Positive Approaches to Behaviour Change Vol 1  |
| Warren B. & Hoffman J<br>1991  | Positive Approaches to Behaviour Change Vol 2  |

### EDUCATION

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Bignell, L. 1991<br>Falmer Press, London | The Way Ahead in Ashdown (Eds Carpenter & Bovair)<br>The Curriculum: Access to the NC for pupils with Learning Difficulties |
|--|---|

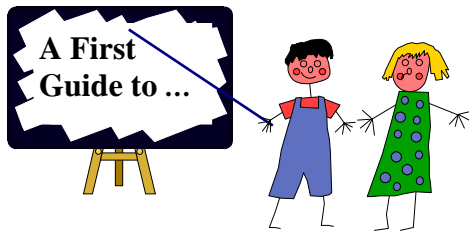
### MISCELLANEOUS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Dept of Health, 1989<br>HMSO, London         | The Children Act: Guidance & Regulations. Vol 4 Residential Care                               |
| LaVigna, et al 1994<br>PH Brookes, Baltimore | The Periodic Service Review: A Total Quality Assurance System for Human Services and Education |
| Maslow A. 1954<br>Harper & Row, NY           | Motivation & Personality   |
| OMRDD, 1997, NY<br>New York                  | People do Matter ... There is No Excuse for Abuse  |

### FAMILY ISSUES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Caroline Archer, 1999<br>(Adoption UK)<br>Jessica Kingsley | First Steps in Parenting The Child who Hurts - Tiddlers & Toddlers<br>and<br>Next Steps in Parenting the Child who Hurts - Tykes & Teens |
| Ed: A Treacher, & I Katz<br>2000. Jessica Kingsley         | The Dynamics of Adoption   |

**Jessica Kingsley Publishers:** Website [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com) Email [post@jkp.com](mailto:post@jkp.com) Tel: 0207 833 2307



## *Attachment Disorder* And check out ...

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.. the OAASIS Information Sheets –

- Attachment Disorder
- Exams and Access Arrangements for Students with Special Needs
- Finding a Special Needs School
- Independent Special Schools – what to look for
- Books – where to find them
- Forthcoming Conferences and Seminars from other organisations
- Useful Contacts and Websites

Visit the OAASIS website for the full list of free downloadable information sheets and other publications: [www.oaasis.co.uk](http://www.oaasis.co.uk).