

# Definitions of Key Terms

**ATTACHMENT:** Is a mutual, reciprocal relationship in which the infant becomes a knowing and active partner. It is a relationship that develops gradually during the early months and years of a child's life, usually becoming well established by the time the child is about a year old. Human infants are strongly predisposed to become attached to the adults who care for them in the first few months of life. Nearly all infants form attachments however, these attachments vary significantly in quality. These differences in quality are broadly classified as **SECURE** and **ANXIOUS**.

**Secure Attachment:** is reflected in the child's ability to use the caregiver as a secure base from which to explore the world and as a reliable source of comfort during times of distress.

**Anxious Attachment:** does not provide that place of comfort and stability and therefore does not serve as a safe platform from which to venture out into the world.

**PARENTAL SENSITIVITY:** Requires consistent and appropriate responses to babies cues and signals. In the early months of life this is the most powerful predictor of the quality of the child's attachment.

**SELF-ESTEEM:** The experience of being capable of meeting life's challenges and being worthy of happiness. The two main components of self-esteem are competence and self-worth. Researchers in this field feel that self-esteem is strengthened through realistic and accurate self-appraisal, meaningful accomplishments, overcoming adversities, bouncing back from failures, and adopting such practices such as assuming self-responsibility and maintaining integrity which engender ones sense of competence and self-worth. (The National Association of Self-Esteem, [www.self-esteem-nase.org](http://www.self-esteem-nase.org))

**RESILIENCE:** To possess the inner strength to deal competently and successfully day after day with the challenges and demands encountered. Resilience embraces the ability of a child to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to bounce back from disappointments, adversity and trauma to develop clear and realistic goals to solve problems, to relate comfortably to others and to treat oneself and others with respect. Resilience explains why some children overcome overwhelming obstacles, sometimes clawing and scraping their way to successful adulthood while others become victims of their early experiences and environments. (Raising Resilient Children, [www.raisingresilientkids.com](http://www.raisingresilientkids.com))

**TEMPERAMENT:** Babies come into the world with different temperamental patterns. There are some children who are naturally active, others who are naturally quiet. Temperaments are the emotional attributes of personality. Theorists suggest babies with different temperamental patterns will react to the environment in very different ways and this will affect their pattern of development. As parents, it is important to recognize and adapt to the basic temperament of your child, so you can respond appropriately. For example, if your child's temperament is timid, introduce new activities slowly. If your child's temperament is active, give advance notice of changes, so they can cope with the transition. If your child's temperament is easy-going, remember that even though they cope well, they still need you—so check in and stay connected. (Sroufe, Cooper. Child 1992).