

# Unit 9: Support Attachment and Positive Relationships for Children and Young People in Residential Childcare

**Unit reference number:** M/506/7616

**QCF level:** 3

**Credit value:** 4

**Guided learning hours:** 27

---

## Unit summary

In this unit, you will gain an understanding of, and the skills needed for, supporting attachment and positive relationships for children and young people in residential childcare. This includes the importance of positive attachments, theories of attachments and the impacts on well-being, if children and young people are not able to form positive attachments. You will understand how to support positive attachments and relationships for children and young people in residential childcare.

The unit will enable you to develop positive relationships, through building a connection with children or young people, while maintaining professional boundaries. You will also address concerns about attachments and relationships of children and young people and reflect on your own practice in supporting positive attachments and relationships.

## Additional information

**Positive attachments** include primary and secondary attachments

**Impacts** may include:

- physiological
- psychological
- emotional
- relational
- behavioural.

**Factors** e.g.

- previous experience of hostile or dysfunctional relationships
- frequent imposed transitions
- trauma
- grief and loss
- disability.

**Skills, methods and approaches** e.g.

- communicating effectively
- using active listening skills
- identifying and sorting out conflicts and disagreements
- being consistent and fair
- showing respect and courtesy
- valuing and respecting individuality
- keeping promises and honouring commitments
- monitoring impact of own behaviour on others
- keeping confidentiality as appropriate
- recognising and responding appropriately to the power base underpinning relationships.

**Others** may include:

- carers and family members
- colleagues
- professionals from other agencies, e.g. teachers, specialist therapists, social workers.

**Agreed strategies** are strategies agreed with other professionals (social workers, psychologists etc.).

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria outline the requirements the learner is expected to meet to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>1 Understand the importance of positive attachments for the well-being of children and young people</p>	<p>1.1 Summarise theories of attachment</p> <p>1.2 Explain why positive attachments are important for children and young people</p> <p>1.3 Analyse the short and long term impacts on the well-being of children and young people if they are not able to form positive attachments</p>
<p>2 Understand how to support positive attachments for children or young people in residential childcare</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse factors in the life of a child or young person which can present barriers to forming positive attachments</p> <p>2.2 Explain the role of parents and care-givers in supporting children and young people to form positive attachments</p> <p>2.3 Explain the connection between positive attachments and positive relationships</p> <p>2.4 Explain how attachment impacts on own role</p> <p>2.5 Describe strategies for supporting children and young people to form positive attachments</p>
<p>3 Understand how to support positive relationships for children and young people in residential childcare</p>	<p>3.1 Describe features of positive relationships for children and young people</p> <p>3.2 Analyse factors in the life of a child or young person which can present challenges when building positive relationships</p> <p>3.3 Describe approaches for building relationships where a child or young person is affected by emotional or behavioural difficulties</p> <p>3.4 Describe ways to support children and young people to develop positive relationships with their peers</p>

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>4 Be able to develop positive relationships with children and young people</p>	<p>4.1 Engage with children or young people to develop positive relationships</p> <p>4.2 Build a connection with children or young people, using a range of skills, methods and approaches to develop positive relationships with them</p> <p>4.3 Maintain professional boundaries in relationships with children and young people in residential childcare</p>
<p>5 Be able to address concerns about attachments and relationships of children and young people</p>	<p>5.1 Seek advice and support from others when concerned about the relationships and attachment behaviour of a child or young person</p> <p>5.2 Implement agreed strategies with a child or young person to promote positive attachments and relationships</p>
<p>6 Be able to reflect on own practice in supporting positive attachments and relationships for children or young people</p>	<p>6.1 Describe how children or young people have been supported by own practice to develop positive attachments and relationships</p> <p>6.2 Evaluate own approaches for supporting positive attachments and relationships for children or young people</p> <p>6.3 Use reflection to inform improvements in own practice</p>

## Unit amplification

---

### **1 Understand the importance of positive attachments for the wellbeing of children and young people**

*Theories of attachment:* e.g. Bowlby's theory of maternal attachment; secure, resistant and avoidant attachment; the stages of separation anxiety and Mary Ainsworth's research into the security of attachment (secure, resistant and avoidant); how these theories might explain children's reactions to being separated from their primary carers

*Why positive attachments are important for children and young people:* e.g. include primary and secondary attachments; positive impact on self-esteem; ability to build trusting relationships; develop mutual respect; ensures good communication; ability to form and maintain positive relationships in the future; develop a strong support network

*The short and long-term impact on the wellbeing of children and young people if they are not able to form positive attachments:* short term, e.g. identity problems; difficulty forming and maintaining relationships; safety risks; emotional impact; self-esteem; long term, e.g. supervised contact may help support identity problems; build relationships; enable children and young people to come to terms with their current situation

### **2 Understand how to support positive attachments for children or young people in residential childcare**

*Factors in the life of a child or young person that can present barriers to forming positive attachments:* e.g. biological factors; poverty; family experience; the environment; cultural aspects; emotional aspects; stresses; delayed development; previous experience of hostile or dysfunctional relationships; frequent imposed transitions; trauma; grief and loss; disability

*The role of parents and care-givers in supporting children and young people to form positive attachments:* e.g. building trust; exchanging and sharing information; tracking development; encouraging parents and/or carers to engage in the child's play, learning and development; preventing misunderstandings; consistency; continuity

*The connection between positive attachments and positive relationships:* e.g. outcomes; attitudes; respect; trust; responsibility; regard; understanding; trust; consistency; continuity; accountability; acceptance

*How attachment impacts on own role:* e.g. role modelling; policy implementation; planning; review; active participation; level of responsibility; reinforcing rules and expectations; use of distraction and diversion; adequate resources made available to support positive outcomes

*Strategies for supporting children and young people to form positive attachments:* e.g. inclusion; support; development; involvement; social skills; self-esteem

### **3 Understand how to support positive relationships for children and young people in residential childcare**

*Features of positive relationships for children and young people:* e.g. the development of attachments and the ability to show empathy; effects on physiological and psychological stress levels; contribution to development in other areas

*Factors in the life of a child or young person that can present challenges when building positive relationships:* e.g. trust; developmental delay; continuity; stress; anxiety; previous experiences; key person approach; settling in; loss; separation; wellbeing; mental ill health; environmental issues

*Approaches for building relationships where a child or young person is affected by emotional or behavioural difficulties:* e.g. provide practical and emotional support within boundaries of own role, e.g. support positive relationships with family and peers; build trust; encourage children to identify and discuss benefits of positive relationships; help children prepare for transitions; support children through transitions; encourage decision making as appropriate

*Ways to support children and young people to develop positive relationships with their peers:* e.g. provide opportunities to take part in organised activities; support children and young people to develop agreements about how to behave; support children and young people to understand other people's feelings and points of view; interact in ways that make children and young people feel welcome and valued

## Information for tutors

---

### Suggested resources

#### Books

Anning A – *Developing Multiprofessional Teamwork for Integrated Children's Services* 2nd edition (Open University Press, 2010) ISBN 9780335238118

Fulcher L et al – *Residential Child Care in Practice: Making a Difference* (Social Work in Practice Series) (Policy Press, 2013) ISBN 9781847423108

Music G – *Nurturing Natures: Attachment and Children's Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development* (Psychology Press, 2010) ISBN 9781848720572

Smith M – *Rethinking Residential Child Care: Positive Perspectives* (Policy Press, 2009) ISBN 9781861349088

Taylor C A – *Practical Guide to Caring for Children and Teenagers with Attachment Difficulties* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010) ISBN 9781849050814

Walker G – *Working Together for Children: A Critical Introduction to Multi-Agency Working* (Bloomsbury 3PL, 2008) ISBN 9780826498175

#### Websites

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk) – provides a variety of information on a range of topics, including research and publications

[www.early-education.org.uk](http://www.early-education.org.uk) – Early Education offers support to all early childhood education practitioners, various publications are available

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) – the government services and information website, including information relating to childcare

[www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk) – National Children's Bureau, offers a variety of resources, including downloadable resources

#### Assessment

This unit is internally assessed. To pass this unit the evidence that the learner presents for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and the requirements of the assessment strategy.

To ensure that the assessment tasks and activities enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence that meet the assessment criteria, centres should apply the *Unit assessment guidance* provided and the requirements of the assessment strategy given below.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt an holistic approach to assessing the units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour and minimises repetition, time and the burden of assessment on all parties involved in the process.

#### Unit assessment requirements

This unit needs to be assessed in line with the Skills for Care & Development QCF Assessment Principles, in *Annexe A*.

## Unit assessment guidance

This guidance supports assessors in making decisions about how best to assess each unit and the evidence needed to meet the requirements. Centres can adapt the guidance as appropriate for learners and the particular assessment context.

For learning outcome 1, learners are required to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of attachment, exploring the benefits of positive attachments and the impact on children and young people of not forming positive attachments.

For ACs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, an assignment or professional discussion could be used to enable learners to explain the concepts in practice and then consider how they could potentially use this knowledge and understanding to inform their practice

For learning outcome 2, learners need to demonstrate an understanding of the approaches that support the development of positive attachments in child or young person-centred service. A reflective account, a professional discussion or a report could be used to cover assessment criteria 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. The reflective account, professional discussion or report could include an analysis of issues that impact on children and young people fostering positive attachments (AC 2.1). Learners could explore their role and the role of others in this process. Learners should include the effect that positive attachments have on the wellbeing of children and young people. Learners should also explore the approaches to supporting children and young people to form positive attachments.

The evidence for learning outcome 3 could be linked to the evidence for learning outcome 2. Evidence could be in the form of anonymised case studies or a reflective account, covering assessment criteria 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, which asks learners to explore features of positive relationships with others and with peers, and the barriers children and young people may face when developing these relationships. Learners should describe methods of overcoming these barriers.

For learning outcome 4, evidence could come from direct observation, where appropriate, or from witness testimony, covering assessment criteria 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. There should be sufficient evidence over time to ensure that the learner has met all of the requirements. The observation should demonstrate the support that children and young people need to form positive relationships with themselves and others, observing agreed ways of working at all times. The evidence drawn from the observation should be supported by a reflective account or journal.

For learning outcome 5, learners need to demonstrate an ability to address any concerns about attachments and relationships of children and young people. Evidence for this learning outcome is required from direct observation, covering assessment criteria 5.1 and 5.2, where learners are asked to demonstrate asking for guidance in relation to concerns they have about the relationships and attachments children and young people are forming; applying approaches as a result of the advice and support given. Alternatively, evidence could be drawn from witness testimony, anonymised work products or personal statement.

The main source of evidence for learning outcome 6 could come from a reflective account, or a case study. For example, for assessment criteria 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 learners could produce a report for colleagues that identifies the support they have given to children and young people to enable them to foster positive attachments and relationships; reflecting on these approaches and identifying changes as a result.