

Infant and Parent Centred Practice

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Parent and Baby

**“There’s no such thing as a baby.
There is a baby and someone.”**

Donald Winnicott (1960)





Some Core Principals

- Observe and enquire about parent *and* child
- If one has been the focus, consider the other
- Suspend judgment, observe and describe
- What happened before, next, after?
- Be a safe base
- Seek our own supervision/ support so we can maintain compassion
- Help enhance the relationship between parent and baby

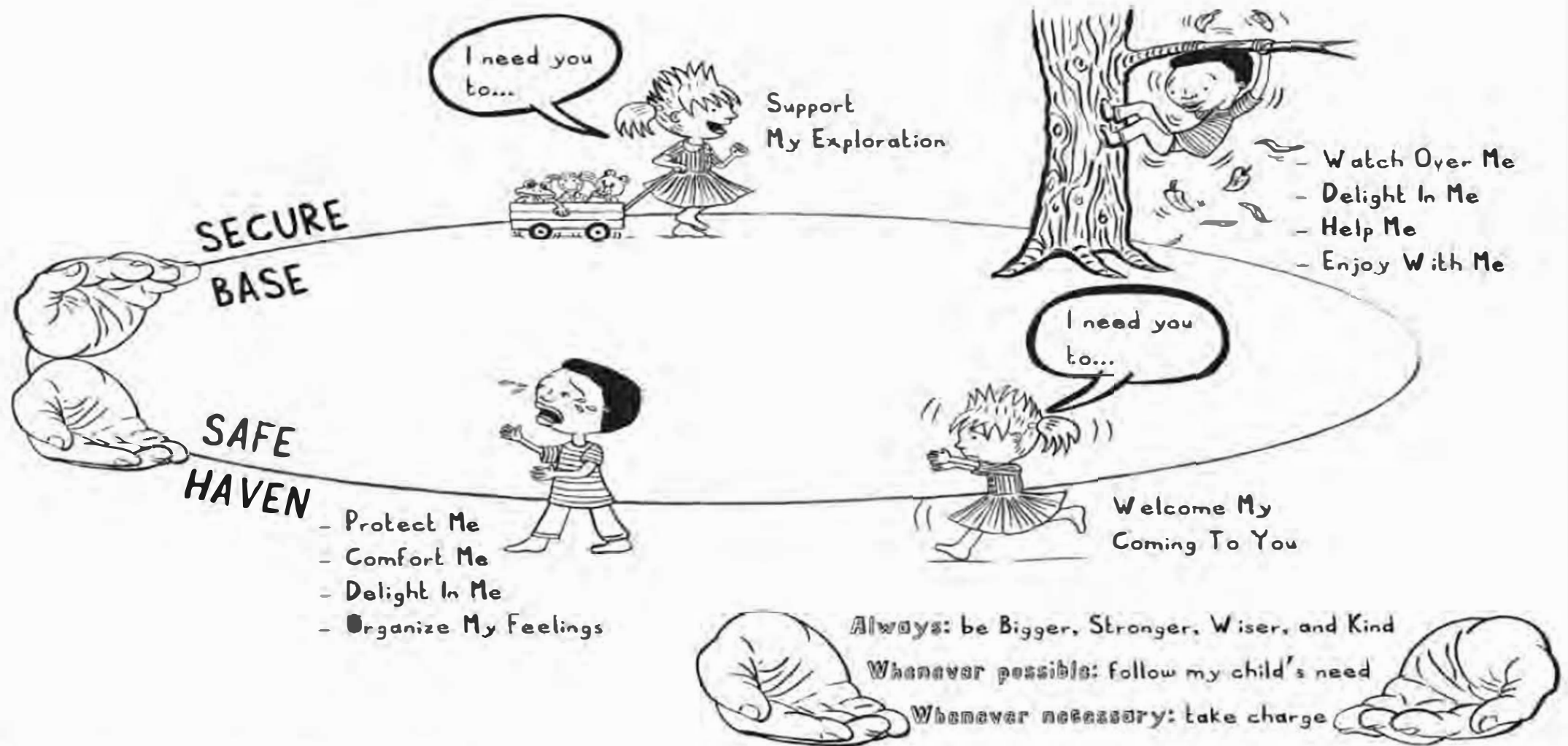
Attachment as a Cultural Change

- Aotearoa NZ has a well embedded history of applying behavioural principles in our bid to create good citizens
 - Ignore/punish what we don't like
 - Reward what we want to encourage
 - Get others to change by telling them our mind and thoughts
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- The attachment literature helps us be confident:
 - to hear the direct and miscued needs of others
 - be with them as they work it though
 - help organise their feelings
 - maintaining appropriate boundaries



Circle of Security®

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



Common Parenting Concerns

- What is a key parenting concern you would most like to consider from a relational viewpoint?
- Sleeping
- Crying
- Not listening
- Being jealous
- Being clingy
- Starting childcare

Sleeping and Contact Naps

- Human babies are completely dependent on adults
- They are born with every sensation we have. They rely on us to contain and organise them. As we do this, they can take a turn at doing it for themselves, while staying in touch with us
- It is a brave thing for them to do, to close their eyes and stay calm enough to sleep, trusting adults will protect them
- Sleeping on the body of another, helps fill up their sense of safety and containment
- It is not making bad habits
- From this place of trust, they can be helped to transition to feeling safe with less full-bodied ways of knowing their parent is there for them when asleep

Crying

- Crying is the communication tool of babies
- Remember, babies can have more than one need at a time
- A parent's job is to allow the communication and reflect on the need, not to prevent the expression
- Imagine not being able to tell another of your upset, in case the other person saw themselves as bad in some way
- Imagine having a need responded to before you register you have it
- Age appropriate discomfort allows babies and children to be confident in expressing themselves and trust they will be helped with all feelings (when the time is right)
- Can be helpful to ask about the cadence of the crying

Not Listening

- Babies cannot intentionally act out.
- “I have told them...” “They know not to ...”
- Observe and describe what is happening
- What is the need of the child – top, bottom, hands, miscued?
- Name and address the child’s needs before the adult’s or other child’s
- Validate parent’s desire to have needs communicated in more socially acceptable ways

Being Jealous

- Can I access my parent when they are with the baby?
- Do I remain important, a priority?
- Parents often respond with explaining unavailability, or giving more 1:1 time
- Child may be needing to feel the relationship continues and they are thought about, even when things change
- Parent talk about how important the child is, express their desire to do the thing, creatively join whilst being with the baby

Being Clingy

- Be aware of normal separation anxiety
- How do I feel safe when my access to you is limited?
- When I notice potential change, I become pre-occupied with our relationship
- Parent's job is to help the child know they can access them
- Play games, connect verbally when separated across a room
- Mostly, allow the child to follow the parent/stay with the parent
- Notice any little signs they are ready to explore, talk to this, go with them/ scaffold if needed

Starting Childcare

- “I feel so guilty” → “They won’t need me anymore”
- We want children to trust they can use other adults as a resource, all the way around the circle
- When they can, it is because their relationship with their parent(s) has enough security
- They are highly likely to be emotional, on drop off, pick up, or at home
- Reunions are the most important time to ensure we reconnect
- Parent’s job is to accept and be with the child

Two Homes: IMHAANZ

