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LOVE-HUNGER IS STRONGER THAN FOOD-HUNGER

Nicoletta Armstrong 2012

This paper represents a compilation of some key information about:

- 1. Scientific studies illustrating the importance of adult-child interaction and how crucial it is for human development.*
- 2. Why investing in programs like ICDP is a good financial investment.*
- 3. Link to the evaluations showing the result of our work – the impact of ICDP on caregivers and children*



WHAT A BABY NEEDS MOST IS A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP BASED ON LOVE

Basic starting point for human psychological development is the formation of an enduring, loving relationship between the baby and either one or a small group of carers. This is a universal feature, both across and within cultures.

The child's relationship with a caregiver is a key factor for the child's healthy growth and intellectual, social and emotional development.

Two basic care-giving skills are particularly important in determining the effectiveness of care: sensitivity and responsiveness. They affect the quality of all care-giving.

CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF CONTACT AND STIMULATION

Children in institutions, deprived of meaningful human contact, with only their physical needs being cared for, have been described by many researchers – such children show symptoms of apathy and withdrawal, or restlessness, hyperactivity, inability to concentrate, and craving for affection. These children are delayed in all areas of development: motor, language, social, emotional and intellectual skills.

THE BRAIN STORY



This brain scan of a child from Romanian orphanage shows what can happen to the brain when a child receives basic physical care but is deprived of love, affection, and comfort. The black areas in this brain scan show inactive areas in the temporal lobes – part of the brain which is vital for processing and regulating emotions. Temporal lobe inactivity can result in poor social and emotional intelligence.

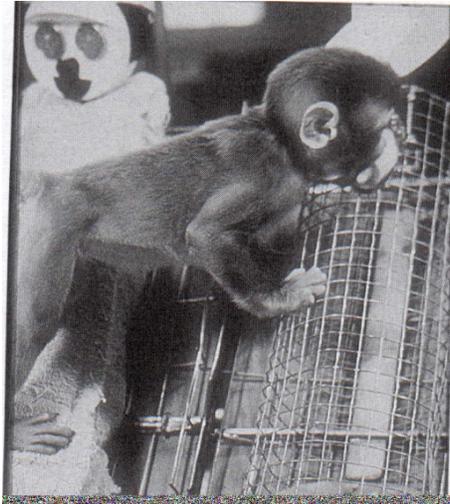


This is a brain scan of a child who has received loving parenting. In contrast to the brain scan of the Romanian child there are few black areas, meaning that the temporal lobes are fully active.

EXPERIMENTS SHOW THIS TO BE TRUE FOR ANIMALS TOO

Social animals isolated from their mothers and receiving no nurturing physical affection develop severe depression and can die from such deprivation. In addition, maternal-infant isolation that leads to sensory deprivation can cause developmental brain damage. These facts show that mother love has a neurobiological basis that is essential for life.

Robert Hinde, of Cambridge University in England, spent 20 years studying behaviour in monkeys. Young primates deprived of this relationship in infancy, may grow up with severe abnormalities, such as stereotyped rocking or self-biting, hyper aggressiveness, sexual incompetence, and even abusive parenting.



Harry Harlow's experiments are part of most psychology textbooks of today; they showed that monkeys raised alone in an environment without mother and peers prefer to be with a furcloth-covered surrogate mother without a milk bottle rather than with a wire-cage surrogate mother that provides a milk bottle, even when hungry.

Photo: Infant monkey moving from cloth surrogate mother to obtain milk from wire surrogate mother.

These experiments show that the need for a loving relationship (represented, in this case, by the "fur") is stronger than the mere need for food even when hungry. *Thus, love-hunger is stronger than food-hunger.*

Drs. William Mason and Gershon Berkson showed the importance of body movement (vestibular-cerebellar simulation) in mother-infant bonding. Monkeys raised singly in cages in a colony room with stationary cloth mother surrogates were compared to those raised with swinging cloth mother surrogates. The infant monkeys reared on the stationary mother surrogate developed all of the abnormalities which isolation-reared monkeys develop – depression, social withdrawal, aversion to touch, stereotypical rocking and chronic toe and penis sucking, self-mutilation and pathological violence as juveniles and adults.

The infant monkeys reared on the swinging surrogate mother developed normally with only minor stimulus-seeking behaviors, e.g. thumb-sucking. Depression, social withdrawal and avoidance of touch were absent in the swinging mother surrogate reared infant monkeys.

There are good reasons why infants and child seek to be carried on the body of their mothers and fathers and love to be rocked to sleep.

RESEARCH ON STRESS IN NURSERY -CORTISOL LEVEL

The level of cortisol, a stress-hormone, seems to be a valid indicator of stress. There are new research studies on children and stress in different settings and under different conditions, like their level of stress in nursery school, during separation, neglect etc. (Sunderland, 2007). There is a wealth of scientific studies from all over the world showing how early stress can result in enduring negative changes in a child's brain.

Studies of children under five show the cortisol level as rising rather than declining during the day in nursery. As soon as the children are back with their parents the level drops dramatically. In one study for 91% of children cortisol level rose at nursery and for 75 % it dropped when they returned home. (Ahnert, 2004, Watermura et al.,2002) Toddlers who played with other children had lower cortisol levels than those who tended to play alone.

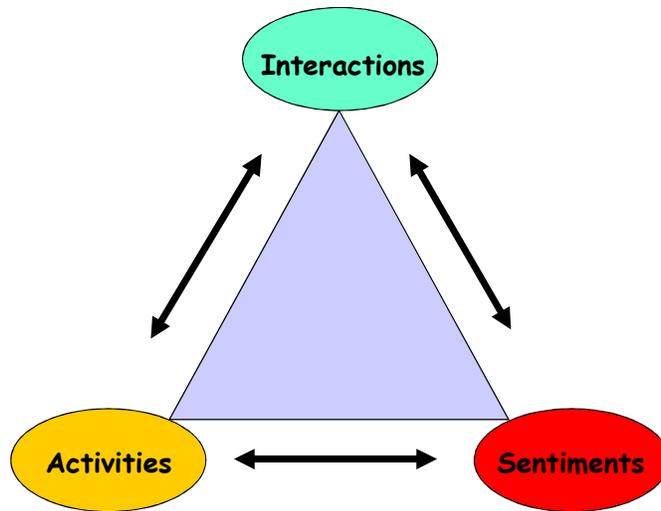
Some research indicates that the high levels of cortisol in nursery school over extended period is associated with more aggression and non-compliance in children (Belsky, 2001). It starts to show at age 2. Findings are particularly significant for babies who had spent 20 hours or more hours per week in nursery during their first year of life.

Research has shown that mothers who attend to their children when they cry had children who cried far less than those mothers who left them to cry (Bolwby, 1988).

Research shows that a child is fine if there is emotionally warm one-to-one attention from a familiar figure like a nanny. It is not enough to give attention to babies only when there is emotional stress. Research has shown that whenever nannies got on with something else, thinking that the child is fine because it was not crying, the child's cortisol level shot up (Dettling, 2000)

Homans' Interaction Theory

-influencing change-

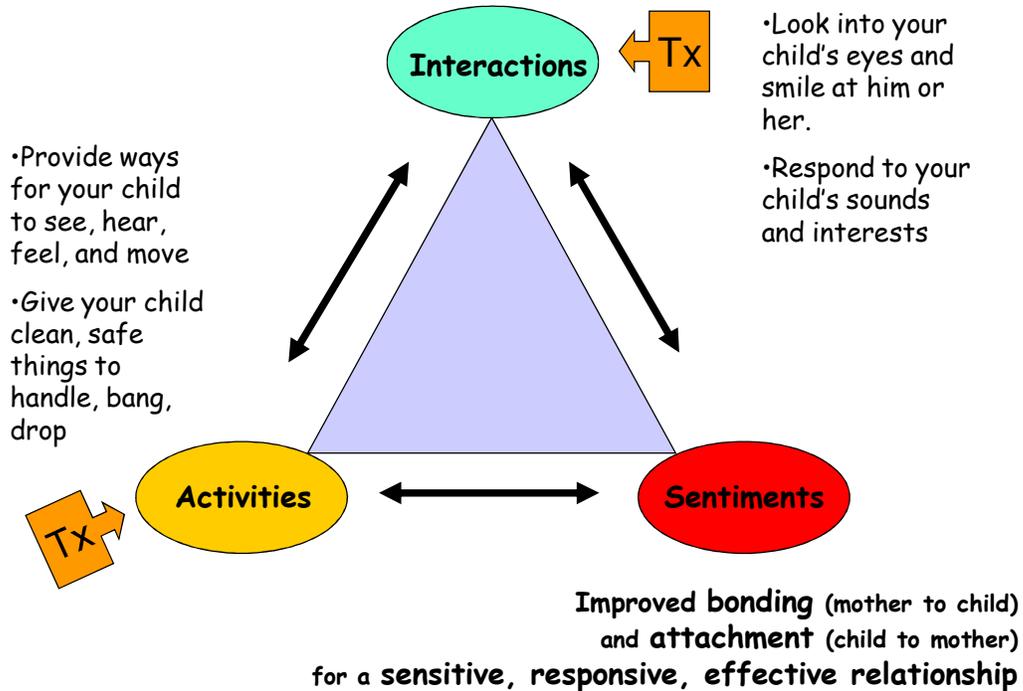


George Homans describes three components of social relationships:

1. Activities: what we do together.
2. Interactions: how we communicate together.
3. Sentiments: how we feel about each other, about our activities and about our interactions together.
4. Each of these components influences the others—as we can see by the arrows—in a system.

Homans proposed, and many others have since proved, that, if you change any one part of the system, you produce changes in the other parts. He also proposed that Activities are the easiest to change directly.

Homans' Interaction Theory: Improving Care for Development



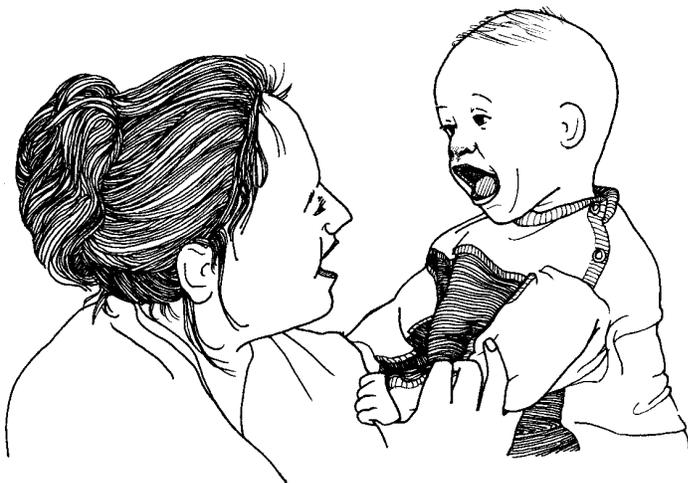
THE ICDP PROGRAMME: A WAY TO ENHANCE SENSITIVE HUMAN INTERACTION AND CARE FOR CHILDREN

The ICDP programme promotes good quality interaction and adult-child relationships, in order to prevent the development of those relationships that are detrimental for the child's well being.

The ICDP programme aims to bring out and sustain good quality interaction between caregivers and their children, by raising the awareness of caregivers about their children's psycho-social needs and by increasing their ability to respond to these needs.

The ICDP programme is both used as a preventive (competence building; resilience building) as well as rehabilitative measure (restoring human care).

WHY INVEST IN ICDP?



Long term impact of early care and its economic advantages

Quote from Grunewald and Rolnick (2007), two leading economists linked to the World Bank: "The evidence is clear that investment in ECD (Early Child Development) for children at risk pays a high public return (17 dollars in return for each dollar invested).

Compared with the billions of dollars spent each year on high risk economic development schemes, an investment in ECD is far better and far more secure economic development tool. Now is the time to capitalize on this knowledge..."

The Perry Preschool Study of high risk children illustrates this effect. The experimental group of children received preschool education with parental involvement. The children were followed up from when they were 3 years old up to 40 years of age. Comparing the development of the children in the experimental group with the children in the control group showed:

- Less criminality
- Fewer school drop-outs
- Fewer in special education
- Fewer teen-age pregnancies
- Fewer received social support
- More completed high school and got vocational training
- More were employed and could support themselves

When the cost of running the preschool was compared with the long-term expenses the children might incur if ending up as school drop-outs and social delinquents, the difference was striking.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development published a document called:

“The Importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and healthy development of young children” A REVIEW Richter, Linda

ISBN 92 4 159134 X (NLM classification: WS 105. 5. C3)

Psychologist Mac Vicker Hunt conducted a study, which illustrates how important caregiver child interaction is for the child’s development. He conducted a study in an orphanage in Iran, where unwanted infants were placed after their birth. There were serious disturbances and considerable delays in children’s development.

- These children were taken care of physically and nutritionally, while the psycho-social and emotional aspects were totally neglected, partially due to lack of staff. Most of these children were strongly impaired in their development, not merely emotionally and intellectually, but also in their motor functions.
- Their average I.Q. was approximately 50.

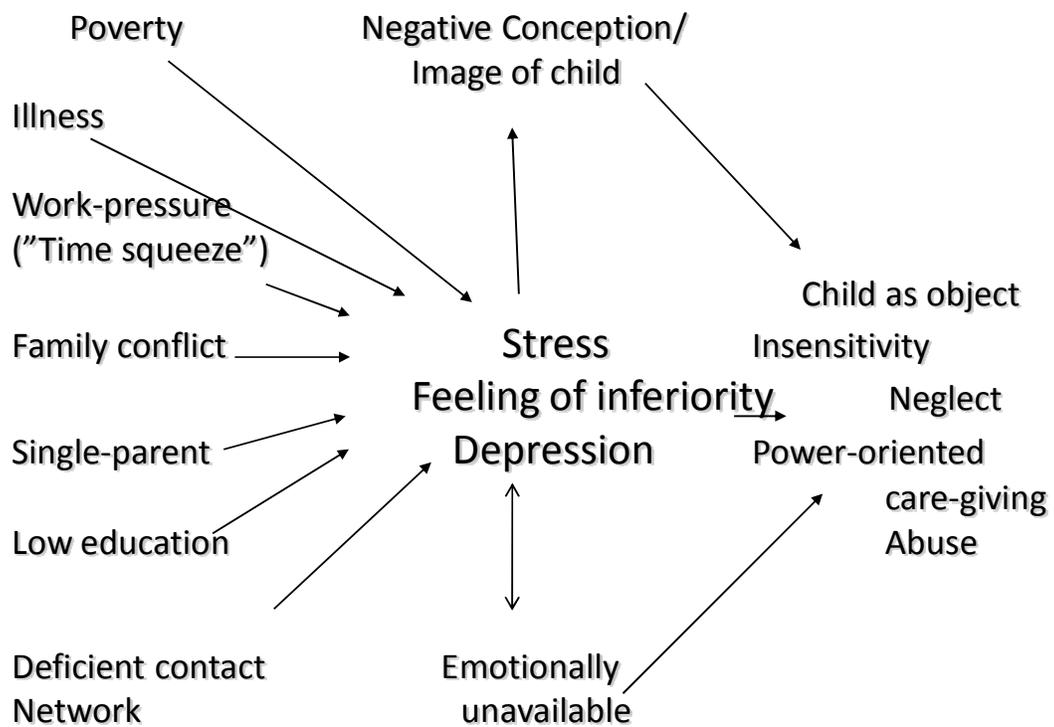
McVicker Hunt (1982) showed that it is possible to make a dramatic difference in the psycho-social development of institutionalized children, with a simple interaction focused programme.

Caregivers were instructed to be responsive to the needs of the children as soon as these are expressed, show them love, play with them and in addition they were instructed to imitate the babbling sounds of the babies in their care in order to establish a cycle of communication.

After a while there was considerable improvement in the children’s condition both linguistically and intellectually. This was documented through examinations and tests before and after the intervention.

The children in the experimental group became alert and interested, their language development became normal and the difference in terms of IQ was of 47 points compared to the control group.

RISK FACTORS FOR NEGLECT OF CHILDREN:



RESILIENCE AND COPING FACTORS:

- Supportive network
- Intimate friends
- Group involvement
- Faith, optimism
- Incentives and hope
- Work/employment
- Education
- Ideology of effort
- Strong will



Empowerment:

Self-confidence

Agency, "I can do"

Seeing possibilities



**Space for human
care, availability
and sensitivity**

**Self-respect and
care for family**

SEVERAL STUDIES REVEALED ICDP'S POSITIVE IMPACT

Independent studies evaluating the work of ICDP in different countries confirm the positive impact of ICDP on the parents' ability to care and relate to their children:

<http://www.icdp.info/training> also <http://www.icdp.info/downloads>

Evaluation study about ICDP by the Norwegian Ministry:

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/bld/aktuelt/nyheter/2011/evaluering-av-foreldreveiledning.html?id=654486>

ICDP WAS EVALUATED AND ADOPTED BY:

WHO

ICDP was evaluated and adopted by WHO and the ICDP manual published as a WHO document in 1997: http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/29.pdf

UNICEF

ICDP was adopted as a strategy to combat violence and contribute to peace building, by UNICEF Colombia and they published a set of ICDP materials ("ICDP Mochila") in 2005: <http://www.publicaciones.unicefcolombia.com/mochila-icdp/>

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND EQUALITY

[http://www.bufetat.no/Documents/Bufetat.no/Program%20for%20foreldrerettleiing/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspill/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspel%20\(bokm%C3%A5I\).pdf](http://www.bufetat.no/Documents/Bufetat.no/Program%20for%20foreldrerettleiing/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspill/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspel%20(bokm%C3%A5I).pdf) for the Norwegian version, and [http://www.bufetat.no/Documents/Bufetat.no/Program%20for%20foreldrerettleiing/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspill/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspel%20\(engelsk\).pdf](http://www.bufetat.no/Documents/Bufetat.no/Program%20for%20foreldrerettleiing/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspill/8%20tema%20for%20godt%20samspel%20(engelsk).pdf)

STRENGTHS OF ICDP AND THE ICDP PROGRAMME:

1. Wide experience: we have reached about one million vulnerable children and have worked in 38 countries over the last 20 years
2. Our central operation is low cost and for many years relied on voluntary work of the founders
3. The programme is based on well documented scientific research
4. ICDP is a good investment as shown by the World Bank analysis of different rates of social return
5. ICDP cooperated and was adopted by important development agencies like WHO, UNICEF, Plan, Save the Children among others
6. ICDP materials were produced with support from WHO and UNICEF
7. The ICDP programme is flexible, adaptable and non intrusive/sensitive to local cultural context
8. The content of ICDP is easy to assimilate as it deals with universal human values
9. The programme is cheap to replicate and the materials are especially designed for that purpose
10. The ICDP programme is easily inserted as a component in an integrated and wider intervention programme – health, education, social services, child protection etc.
11. Evaluation of ICDP have shown that it is reasonable to expect a positive impact from our work