



API - Canton

Attachment Parenting International

March 2006 Newsletter

Frequently Asked Questions About Attachment Parenting

1. Who started Attachment Parenting?

Dr. William Sears, a practicing paediatrician in California, coined the term "attachment parenting" over twenty-five years ago. Dr. Sears did not start attachment parenting but simply observed that mothers in other cultures cared for and raised their children in a very natural, loving way as they had done for thousands of years. This type of care helped the parents and baby form a strong, secure attachment. It has long been recognized by research in the field of psychology that babies and children with secure attachments grow up to be loving, trusting and empathic adults.

Dr. Sears and his wife Martha, who is a nurse and is involved with La Leche League (a breastfeeding support organization), have not only raised their eight children with this style of parenting but have written many books on the subject. Their books have been instrumental in educating the public in attachment parenting methods.

2. If I disagree with your attachment parenting philosophy does that mean I'm a bad parent?

We call the eight methods of attachment parenting "ideals". We understand that not all parents are able or willing to implement these methods for a variety of reasons. These are ideals that we all strive for. None of us are perfect. The real point here is that we want to help parents to learn their baby's cues and needs. When they do, they are able to follow their instincts to meet those needs. Our goal is to educate parents in the methods and the science so they can make educated decisions but also trust in their instincts. To disagree with our philosophy does not brand parents as "bad parents". It's doubtful, however, that most parents could not agree with at least some of the attachment parenting ideals.

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AP-Related Websites

The Natural Child Project
www.naturalchild.org

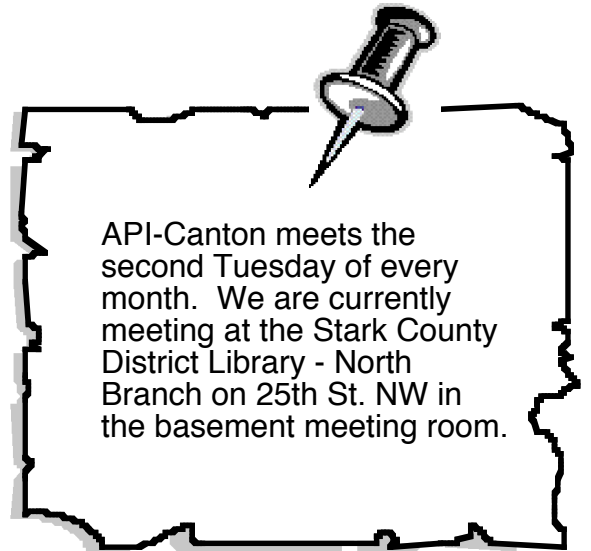
Nurturing Parenting
www.nurturingparenting.com

Parents Action For Children
www.iamyourchild.org

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“Parents need to fill a child's bucket of self-esteem so high that the rest of the world can't poke enough holes to drain it dry.”

-Alvin Price

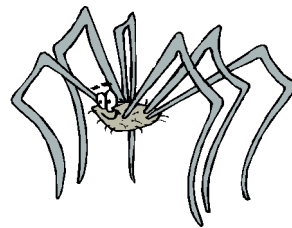


API-Canton meets the second Tuesday of every month. We are currently meeting at the Stark County District Library - North Branch on 25th St. NW in the basement meeting room.

Upcoming Events



May 19-21st 2006 The First Attachment Parenting International Conference : Attachment Parenting – Foundations for the Future to be held in Ireland.



API-Canton
Websites:

Home Page:

<http://www.orgsites.com/oh/apicantoncircle/index.html>

Discussion Group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apammaof2/?guid=198814301>

We are very supportive of parents in nurturing their children in the way they feel best. We know that children who are nurtured are not likely to develop mental health problems or be violent later in life. Parents are often confused by differing opinions on childcare. It's no wonder parents are at a loss of what to do. Others know they want to raise their children differently than the way they were raised, yet aren't sure how. We offer suggestions in parenting to help parents learn to connect to their baby. These parenting methods are research based. It has been scientifically demonstrated that babies have certain physiological and emotional needs that have previously gone unrecognized in our western society.

Likewise, mothers also experience physiological reactions when nursing and nurturing that help them become more motherly. The needs of human babies are very similar to those of most other mammals. Science has learned a tremendous amount from observing the interactions of mammals and their babies. Our human intelligence seems to have distanced us from very basic human needs.

3. Do I have to practice all of the attachment parenting ideals to be an attachment parent?

No. We recognize that families have various circumstances in their lives that may preclude them from practicing all the attachment parenting "ideals". We also want parents to know that AP is not a "one size fits all" formula for parenting. What we want parents to understand is the core emotional and psychological needs babies have, even before birth. Parents who recognize these needs will make decisions based on what their child needs, not on what the parenting books or other experts say you must do. Attachment parenting comes from the heart. As a sensitive parent you will be sensitive to what your child needs regardless of your life circumstances.

4. Can parents do too much attachment parenting?

No! Because the cornerstone of attachment parenting is being responsive to the child's physical and emotional needs, it is virtually impossible to 'overly' attachment parent. However, many confuse a responsive parent with a 'smother' parent, an 'enmeshed' parent, or an 'indulgent' parent, as all four have similar characteristics - the parent is very involved with the child. It is important to understand the difference between these, as they are nothing like a responsive parent.

A 'smother' parent is not being responsive to the child's needs, but instead is imposing their own will on the child, regardless of the child's needs. The 'smother' parent tells the child 'when to eat, what to eat, when to sleep, what to play, what to think'. The 'responsive' parent follows the children's lead, and feeds the child when he is hungry, puts him to sleep when he is tired, helps him to follow his interests and passions, etc.

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The 'enmeshed' parent is trying to live their life through their child, and is not being responsive to the child's needs. It is not the child's dreams and wishes that are being considered, but those of the parent. However, it is easy to distinguish an 'enmeshed' parent from a responsive parent, as they are not looking at what is best for the child, but what they want.

The 'indulgent parent' is one who does not know how to set limits and is not being a responsive to the child's needs. Children need limits and direction, and an adult helping them to grow up into being responsible adults. Many parents confuse 'indulgence' with attachment parenting, but it is not the same at all. Attachment parenting would involve setting limits in a warm loving way, without the threat of physical violence or cruelty.

Remember that there is no such thing as being too responsive to your child's needs, as it requires doing what is best for the child rather than what is best for the parent. However, it may involve learning more about what the real needs of children are.

5. Will I spoil my child if I always respond to his cries and hold him a lot?

Your child will learn to trust others because his mother or father was always there when he needed them. He will learn empathy and be able to empathize with others because his parents listened to him and validated his feelings. He will learn that to be touched and held is a wonderful experience. It makes him feel secure and loved. He will then be able to touch and hold others in a loving way. To spoil a child is to not teach these valuable lessons in the first years of his life.

Join API

Attachment Parenting International (API) is a tax exempt, 501(c)(3), nonprofit, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan organization. API membership is not required to attend API group meetings but is encouraged to sustain the activities of the group and support the work of API. All donations to API are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible.

Individual/Family Membership , \$35.00 (one-year membership includes four complimentary quarterly issues of the Attachment Parenting: The Journal of Attachment Parenting International).

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