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TITLE: Infant Attachment Security, Maternal Sensitivity, and Maternal
State of Mind With Respect to the Infant in Mothers Who Register for an
Attachment Based Parenting Course

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Abstract

Maternal sensitivity has been the primary focus as the likely transmission vehicle from maternal state of mind with respect to infant attachment security; however, current research has not provided support for this mediation model. Maternal state of mind with respect to the infant has been shown to predict infant attachment security, but without attention to how it is transmitted. This study examined maternal state of mind with respect to the infant and maternal sensitivity as predictors of infant attachment security, and maternal sensitivity as the mediator. Maternal representations were measured using the Working Model of the Child Interview (WMCI), with forty-four mothers involved in an intervention study. The Maternal Behaviour Q-sort and Infant Attachment Q-sort were used to measure maternal sensitivity and infant attachment security, respectively. Results indicated that both maternal state of mind with respect to the infant and maternal sensitivity were significant, relatively independent predictors of infant attachment security (r 's=.38 and .54, respectively, p 's>.05) and that maternal sensitivity was not a mediator. These findings are congruent with research examining the relationship among Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) classifications, maternal sensitivity, and infant attachment security. Possible explanations for the “transmission gap” are discussed, including the assessment and concept of maternal sensitivity and the influence of contextual factors.