

Babies in Our Minds: Working Therapeutically with Parents and Infants to Promote Secure Attachment and Emotional Wellbeing



Early Years Emotional Security Ltd: Rachel Pardoe - Course Director and Lead Trainer
earlyyes.ltd@gmail.com

3-day training

Module 1: Infant Brain Development + Observation/Recording Skills

- How early relationships impact on the structure of the infant's brain, with long-term implications
- The impact of neglect and trauma on brain development and behaviour – in both parent and infant
- Essential skills in detailed observation, and documenting of infant behaviour and parent-infant interaction

Module 2: Attachment in Practice - the importance of early positive relationships, and how we can promote secure attachment

- Why do infants and children behave as they do?
- What is the impact of early life experience?
- What impact do parents have on the infant's social and emotional development?
- The importance of the parent's capacity for mentalisation
- How can we support parents with the difficult task of understanding and attuning to their infants?

Module 3: Modified Watch Wait and Wonder – promoting parental attunement through infant-led play

- Understanding of the principles of the well-established therapeutic intervention *Watch, Wait and Wonder* (Muir 1992), and the universal adaptation developed by Dr Zilibowitz (See references)
- Understanding of how WWW can enhance parental sensitivity, attunement and bonding, and promote a more secure attachment in the infant
- Skills to use WWW in practitioners' own settings: all perinatal practitioners, whatever their role, can use this approach

Learning Outcomes

- Understanding of **theoretical concepts in infant's social and emotional development, and parent-infant relationships**, including:
 - Psychobiological brain development
 - Emotional regulation
 - Attachment security/insecurity & Intergenerational transmission
 - Mind-Mindedness
 - Parental attunement and sensitivity
 - Resilience

- **Application of theoretical concepts** to work with infants and their parents, including understanding the **infant's communication through behaviour and play**.
- **Essential skills in detailed observation** and recording of infant behaviour and parent-infant interaction
- More thorough **assessment** of emotional needs of parent and infant
- **Reduced risk and better safeguarding**, and more effective communication with the professional network
- Essential skills in **building robust therapeutic relationships with parents** to enable them to support their infant's emotional development and secure attachment.

Babies in Our Minds aims to increase practitioners' knowledge (referencing child development research) and understanding of the emotional and psychological factors influencing the development of infants, their relationships with their parents, and their ongoing emotional wellbeing.

The course emphasises the importance of **detailed observation, reflection and analysis**.

- **Guidelines** are provided on how to observe and record infant behaviour and parent-infant interaction
- Understanding is enhanced through **detailed analysis of DVDs**
- **Case examples** illustrate the value of this detailed observation
- Practitioners have an opportunity to bring their **own case studies** for in-depth discussion.

The training also focuses on '**intergenerational transmission**': what parents bring to their parenting of infants, from their own childhood experiences of being parented, and the impact of their own past trauma.

This understanding of the complexity of the parent-infant relationship contributes to **more effective assessment, safeguarding and intervention with parents and infants**.

Participants are enabled to **integrate theory and practice**, providing a **solid basis for assessment of emotional needs and therapeutic intervention, and effective communication with the network**.

Detailed reference lists are provided, including references for academic journal articles, books and websites.

Background to Babies in Our Minds

The training has been adapted from workshops and courses delivered by Rachel Pardoe since 2004. The EarlyYES *Who Am I?* 5-day course has been delivered to date to 110 practitioners in Wales and Swindon, including Health Visitors, Midwives, Social Workers, Family Workers, Youth Workers, CAMHS mental health practitioners, and voluntary sector family worker staff.

A similar training developed by Rachel Pardoe was delivered under North Bristol NHS Trust (2011-2016) to over 180 Health Visitors and other practitioners in Bristol and Swindon.

In 2019, Rachel was **commissioned by NHS England** to deliver Modules 1 & 2 of *Babies in Our Minds* to 20 perinatal staff in the south west. This course delivery built on training delivered to perinatal teams in the Bristol area in 2018-19. Feedback was highly positive.

Practitioner Feedback

Feedback on Modules 1 & 2 from perinatal staff in the south west:

*“The two days have been **incredibly helpful in upskilling and will definitely impact on my day to day work** with families.” (Mental Health Nurse)*

*“There were many useful points and **although I have learned about attachment before, today it made more sense**. The teaching was at the right pace and kept my interest throughout – thank you. I will be taking a lot from it!” (Mental Health Nurse)*

*“Focus on the baby – **with years as an adult Mental Health professional, it’s been great to be able to view the baby holistically in the sessions**. I value the shared discussion and found reading lists very helpful to guide learning.” (Occupational Therapist)*

*“Revisiting theory of attachment, and then **directly applying the theory to our role/service – made even richer with the case studies**.” (Mental Health Nurse)*

*“Helpful to think about recording observations of parent/infant interactions in an accurate and helpful way. **Voice of the child** to be used in all interventions/contacts.” (Mental Health Nurse)*

“I found the techniques for recording observations very helpful to record the voice of the child – feel more confident on how to record my observations” (Perinatal MH Worker)

“Excellent use of DVD examples – thank you for showing us what happens when it doesn’t go well.” (Perinatal MH Worker)

Feedback on EarlyYES *Who Am I?* 5-day course is consistently extremely positive (see website).

“Thank you for an excellent course which is invaluable in my work with families.” (Specialist Health Visitor)

“I have a better understanding of the emotions of children and how they manifest in their behaviour. Giving children a voice by being more observant of interactions with parents.” (Health Visitor)

“Increased knowledge of children’s social and emotional development has increased [my] professional confidence to use this in all aspects of work, especially when there is urgency, eg child protection and emotional harm.” (Specialist Health Visitor).

“I feel I make more detailed observations when visiting families. I’m confident to ask about previous trauma & experiences to inform my work.” (Family Worker)

‘Feeling more confident to use the language of brain development/attachment and being able to back this up with evidence. Being more confident to hear the parents’ story.’ (Health Visitor)

“This course has allowed me to explore more effective ways of working with families. It has also given me the language and confidence to improve my report writing skills.” (Health Visitor)

Practitioner feedback over many years demonstrates that **EarlyYES training contributes significantly to workforce development, enabling practitioners to access up-to-date knowledge and skills** based on the most recent research evidence.

Cost: around £340pp for 3 days, if 14 practitioners or more attend.

Training delivered locally to you.

Please contact Rachel Pardoe: 07758 519607

earlyyes.ltd@gmail.com

<https://www.earlyyes.co.uk>