# The Role of the Father in Attachment

### **Questions**

1. According to Schaffer and Emerson (1964), at what age do most babies form their first attachment, and to whom?

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1. What percentage of cases in Schaffer and Emerson’s study had the father as the sole first attachment figure?

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1. What did Grossmann et al. (2002) find about the role of fathers in children's later attachment and relationships?

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1. How did Grossmann et al. describe the quality of fathers' play with babies, and why is this significant?

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1. According to research by Field (1978), what behaviour was observed in primary caregiver fathers that differed from secondary caregiver fathers?

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1. What conflicting evidence exists regarding the role of fathers in child development from studies such as McCallum and Golombok (2004)?

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1. How can research on the role of the father help reassure parents in single-parent and same-sex families?

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1. What is one key limitation of research into the role of fathers due to confusion over research questions?

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1. How might stereotypes in advertising and media create biases in research about fathers' roles?

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1. What real-world application does research on fathers’ roles have for parents making decisions about caregiving?

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### **Answers**

1. Around 7 months, usually to their mother.
2. 3% of cases.
3. Fathers’ attachment influenced children's later social relationships, but less than mothers'.
4. Fathers’ play was more stimulating and linked to later social competence.
5. They showed more smiling, imitation, and reciprocity similar to mothers.
6. Children of single mothers or same-sex parents develop normally without fathers.
7. It suggests a father is not essential for healthy child development.
8. Studies differ on whether they examine primary or secondary attachment figures.
9. They reinforce traditional gender roles, affecting study expectations and interpretations.
10. It can help parents make informed choices about caregiving roles without social pressure.

**Extension Task:**
Reflect on the findings discussed in the research. Do you think fathers play a unique role in attachment, or is their role interchangeable with that of mothers? Justify your answer with evidence.