

8. Infancy : Emotional Development



Reflection / Darpan

Read the episode and answer the questions :

Child (Excitedly) : “Ma, it’s my friend’s birthday this weekend. She has asked me to come for a sleepover.”

Mother (working in the kitchen) replies : “You cannot go since we are going to see your grandparents.”

Child : “ But Ma !!, I promised her I would be there....”

Mother : “ Tell her you’ll come next week.”

Child (in a small voice) : “But Ma... I wanted to go and her voice trails off.

- (1) Can you identify the feelings of the child during the conversation?
- (2) How would you describe the mother’s response?
- (3) Have you faced a similar situation like this too?
- (4) What would you feel?
- (5) How can you change the ending keeping in mind the feeling of the mother and the child?

The above story and exercise will give you an idea of the importance of recognizing emotions and managing them. In this chapter we will try to understand the meaning of emotions, its components and managing a few of the emotions in children.

Reflection / Darpan

Can you think of an event / incident which made you angry?

How did you react? What did you say and do?

What was the result?

If you could change your response what would you say? Why?

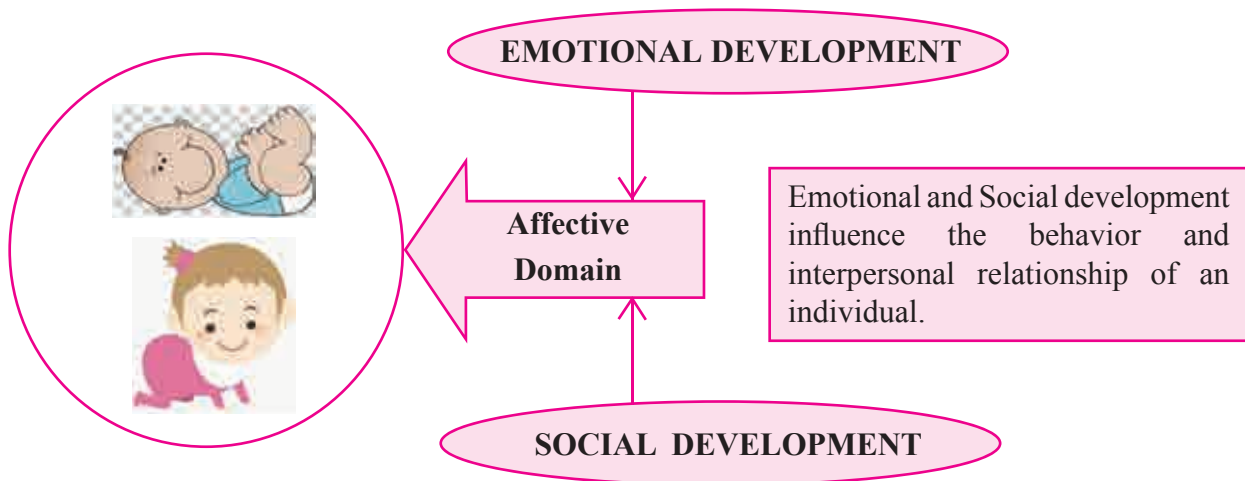


Fig. 8.1 Interrelation between social and emotional development.

8.1 Meaning and Definition of Emotional Development :

The word Emotion is derived from the Latin word 'Emovere', which means "to stir up." Emotion is a stirred up state of an organism. The important and basic part or core of emotions is 'feelings.' Emotions play an important role in life.

Emotions have four basic components :

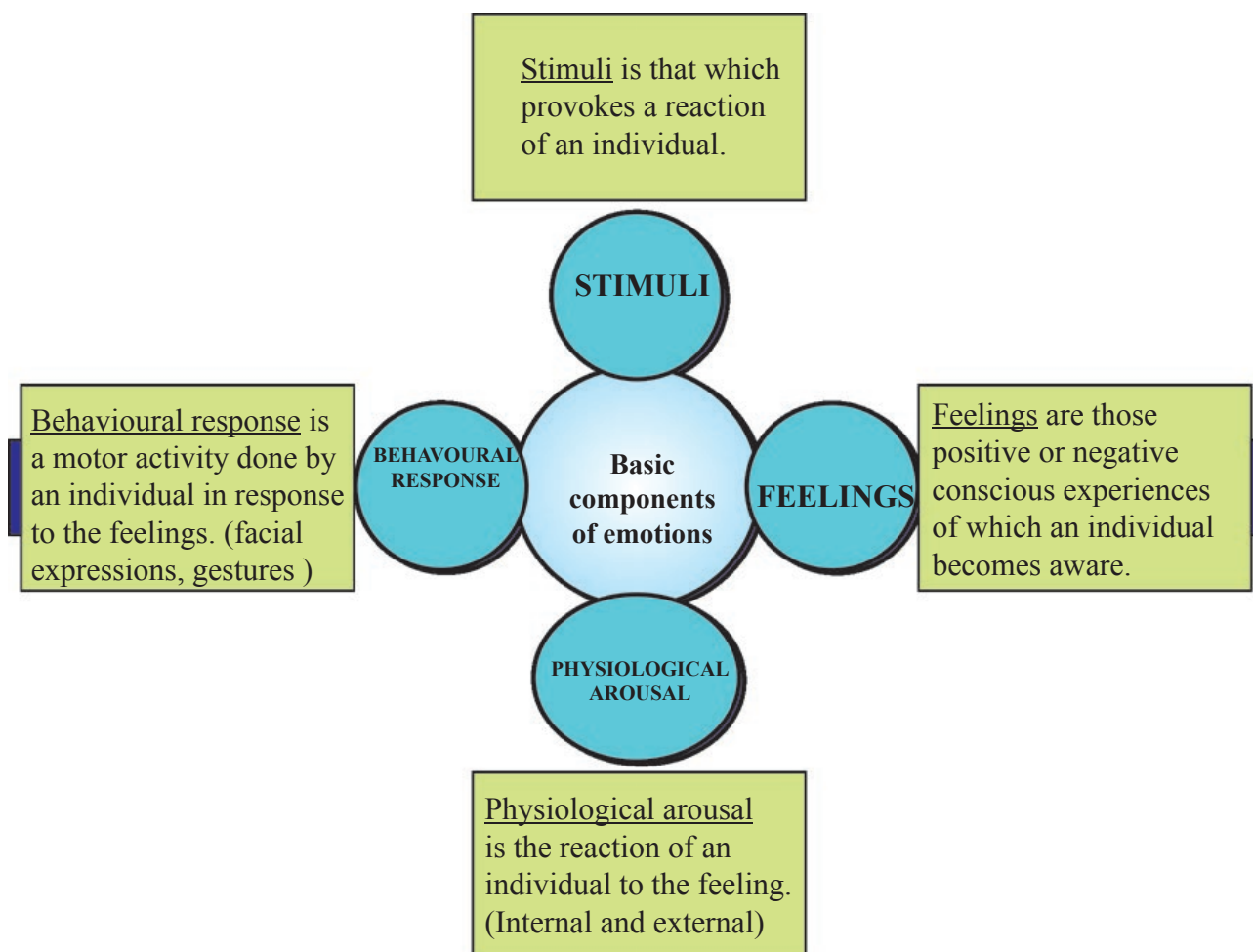


Fig. 8.2 Four basic components of emotions.

Definition of Emotions and Emotional Development.

- Kimball Young defined Emotion as, “An acute disturbance of the individual as a whole, psychological in origin, involving behaviour”.
- Emotional development means the ability to recognize, express and manage feelings in socially approved ways. It includes accurately identifying emotions in oneself and others, managing strong emotions such as excitement, anger, frustration and distress.

Some points to note about emotions are :

- Emotions are an aroused state of body and mind.
- Emotions are manifested through behaviour.
- Emotions are a reaction to feelings and impulses.

For example when we experience excitement, our heart beat increases, breathing is faster. Children manifest excitement through waving of arms and legs, eyes look brighter and larger or by jumping up and down.

Activity :

Select any one emotion and describe its four components.

Observe and identify what you are feeling right now? Notice the physiological changes in your body and note which part of the body experiences it.







Fig. 8.3 Types of emotions

8.2 Milestones in Emotional Development During Infancy :

Developmental milestones are physical or behavioural signs of development in infants and children. They provide important information regarding a child's development. The milestones are different for each age group. Additionally a child's development is influenced by the environment at every stage. Children progress toward milestones through interaction with their environment. Let us now see some of the milestones of an infant's emotional development.

Table 8.1 : Milestones in Emotional Development During Infancy

| Age group | Milestones | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| At Birth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction to pleasant stimuli and withdraw from unpleasant stimuli • Shows distress • Begins to self soothe after crying |  |
| 2-4 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant engages in social smile and responds to active stimuli • Shows interest in things around. • Respond to adult's facial expression • Express anger, fear • Laughs spontaneously |  |
| 6-8 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stranger anxiety and fear begins to rise • Attachment to caregivers is evident • Separation anxiety is expressed • Curiosity about environment • Shows surprise, happiness • Explore more when they feel secure in the presence of caregiver |  |
| 8-12 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social referencing appears • They laugh at subtle elements of surprise • begin to show spontaneous shift in emotions. |  |

8.3 Types of Emotions : (Causes, Expression and Handling)

Emotional development begins during infancy and continues through childhood. There are numerous factors that influence the development of emotions in children. How parents and primary caregivers interact with children, plays a vital role in the development of emotions in children. Other important influencing factors include childrens abilities, disabilities, cultural influences, the opportunities for social interaction, and their temperament.

Let us now see what the common emotions expressed during infancy are, their causes and handling.

1) Love and Affection :

Love and affection are pleasant emotions. The Infant is closely attached to its mother, as she fulfills all its basic needs. As trust grows overtime, the infant begins to bond with the mother or caregiver.

Expressions :

- Infants look at their mother and smile.
- Lean towards the mother.
- Show satisfaction on face after being breast fed.
- Feel secure in mother's lap.
- After 6 to 8 months facial expressions show love towards other family members.
- Social smile, giggling.
- Show playful behaviour, towards the concerned person.
- Reaching out to people.



Expression of love and affection

Handling :

- Give loving attention
- Be affectionate
- Respond / reciprocate in a loving manner
- Express love and affection.

2) Joy :

Joy is a pleasurable feeling and emotion. This emotion arises in the presence of stimuli such as a familiar voice, playful sounds of toys, feeding, being taken for an outing.



Joyful baby

Expressions :

- Smile, giggle, laugh, gurgle, clap
- Moving legs and hands
- Social smile and joyful expressions when talked to and played with.

Handling :

- Provide appropriate stimuli
- Reciprocate, smile be attentive.
- Be loving and playful.

Discuss what are the things that arouse your joy / fear.

4) Fear :

Fear is an unpleasant emotion. Feelings of insecurity usually arouse fear. Fear emotion emerges at the age of 8 to 9 months. Fear emerges during this stage as children are able to compare an unfamiliar event with what they know. Unfamiliar situations, objects or individuals often elicit fear responses in infants.

Remember !

Fear can be a good informant. Don't ignore it, block it out, or censor it. Pay attention to the warning it is giving. For eg when you feel unsafe with someone, ask or call for help. Get away. Use your judgment, and figure out what is the best thing to do.



Fear

Expressions:

- Cries with eyes closed
- Holds mother or caregiver's hand tight.
- Holds onto the adult's clothes, clings to them
- Screams
- Hides behind mother or caregiver
- Avoids situation that create fear

Causes:

- Big and sudden noise, darkness
- Sometimes children get scared to touch a new toy
- Children get fearful of strangers
- Sudden change in position also makes an infant fearful
- Infants exhibit associated fear e.g; they get scared of doctor because of injection.
- Fears are learnt through first hand experiences like fear of sudden noise of fire crackers or of an adult who is afraid of a cockroach, lizard
- Due to adult's words of caution infants often develop fear of fire, or sharp pointed objects such as knives or electric sockets.

Handling:

- The first step in helping a child to overcome their imagined fear is to accept their feelings as real and respond to them sensitively
- Avoid ridiculing or dismissing a child's feelings
- Be patient instead of getting frustrated and angry.
- Avoid being overprotective
- Parents may have to help their child to avoid the feared object for a while
- Express understanding of their fear

Do you know?

When you label and validate the emotions of a child or any person the intensity of the emotion reduces

Activity :

Make a note of when you experience emotions such as anger, anxiety or any other emotion for a few days. Label the emotion and acknowledge what you are feeling. Notice and rate the intensity of these emotions on a scale of 1 - 10.

5) Anger :

Anger is an unpleasant emotion. All human beings feel angry occasionally. Babies sometimes differ from toddlers and preschoolers in what makes them feel frustrated or angry. Anger is a normal part of a child's development and dealing with it is one of the most important challenges of parenthood. It is important to remember that a baby has only one means of expressing anger i.e. crying.



Anger

Expressions:

- Crying is the first expression of anger by an infant
- Screaming, throwing objects, or tearing things are some of the other expressions
- Biting or hitting
- Sometimes babies curl their bodies when picked up against their will.
- Facial muscles become tight while expressing anger towards something they want to avoid
- Toddlers throw tantrums to show anger

Causes:

- Unpleasant stimulus
- When left for too long in their bed with no stimulation and attention
- When an adult hovers over them or becomes an obstacle for them or tries to slow them down.
- Restricting movement - when a baby wants to move freely and cannot, it may result in desperate cries.

Handling:

- Give comfort and affection to the infant. This will help the child feel secure, loved and valued.
- Try distracting the baby
- Be calm and just hold the baby close. Our calmness will help to calm down the baby
- With slightly older children, be firm and draw boundaries or limits when something is totally unacceptable such as biting or hitting
- The response should be a clear statement: "You are allowed to feel angry. Hurting yourself and others is not acceptable"
- At the age of two, teach the child to use language to express feelings
- Parents can model positive coping skills to help children handle their own anger

Activity :

Recognize the emotion and the age at which it is expressed



Picture No. 1



Picture No. 2



Picture No. 3



Picture No. 4



Picture No. 5

Write your Answer here

Picture No. 1

Picture No. 2

Picture No. 3

Picture No. 4

Picture No. 5

Activity :

- Observe children in your surrounding, and make a note of the causes of their anger and fear.

Write an incident of your observation of the same

8.4 Development of Attachment, Separation Anxiety and Stranger Anxiety :

Attachment :

Infants always show attachment behaviour. Infant attachment is a deep emotional connection that an infant forms with his or her primary caregiver, often the mother. It is a bond that leads the infant to experience pleasure, joy, safety and comfort in the caregiver's presence. The baby feels distress when that person is absent. Soothing, comforting and providing pleasure is a primary element of attachment. Attachment protects the child from any impending harm as they cling, grasp or vocalize indicating discomfort or distress. This attachment behaviour is an indication of the infant's trust toward the caregiver.

Anxiety

Anxiety is the body's natural response to stress. It is a feeling of fear about what is to come. e.g. An infant may show nervousness and fear in the presence of a stranger. This is called 'stranger anxiety.'

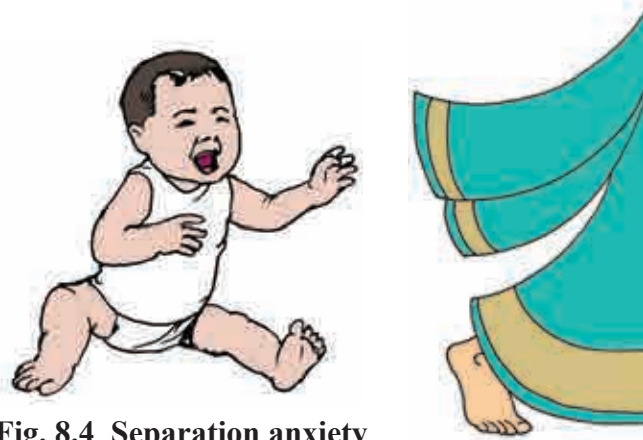


Fig. 8.4 Separation anxiety

Separation Anxiety :

Separation anxiety is a normal part of development. Separation anxiety is when a baby becomes anxious or upset when they are separated from the person who cares for them.

Leaving the baby with a babysitter or in childcare can be more upsetting for the baby than the parents. During this stage, children develop anxiety when they are separated from their parents or primary caregivers. Separation anxiety begins when children are about 8 months old and reaches its peak when children are 10 to 18 months old. Children become frightened when they meet new people or visit new places. They turn to their parents and caregivers for safety and reassurance. Children at this age cry when their parents or caregivers leave the room. This indicates that the children have developed a sense of attachment to their parents or caregivers.

Handling Separation Anxiety in children :

- Make sure that the caregiver is familiar with the child.
- Encourage the person caring for the child to engage the child with toys, a game, or another activity as the parents leave.
- Parents should validate their child's emotion before leaving. e.g. "Yes you are sad", or "Yes you are going to miss me, I will be back".
- Remain calm and reassuring.
- Establish routines at separation to ease the child's anxiety.
- Feeding the child and letting the child nap before the caregiver leaves (because separation anxiety may be worse when a child is hungry or tired).
- Parents or caregivers may try playing peek-a-boo with children of this age to reassure children that out of sight does not mean gone forever.

Separation anxiety continues until children are about 24 months old. It reduces when children learn that their parents or caregivers still exist even when they cannot be seen. Children gradually learn to trust that their parents or caregivers will eventually return.



Fig. 8.5 Stranger Anxiety

Stranger Anxiety :

Infant show stranger anxiety and become worried or fearful when someone unfamiliar approaches them. It indicates that the baby has learnt to differentiate between known and unknown people and formed a strong bond with the caregiver. Stranger anxiety may begin between 6 and 12 months of age.

Expression of Stranger Anxiety in Infants and Toddlers

The signs of stranger anxiety in infant is not difficult to spot, and can generally be observed whenever social interactions are taking place. These are seen in the following conditions.

- Fearful behaviour when interacting with other children.
- Seeing an unknown person or guest at home
- Any stranger making an attempt to get closer
- A known person dressed in a different manner
- Being alone in a room with an unknown person
- Breathing rapidly to calm down
- Searching around the house looking for the people whom they know
- Hiding behind an object
- Turning away from the stranger
- Getting too fussy
- Start crying uncontrollably
- Clinging to the caregiver when some unknown person tries to come closer

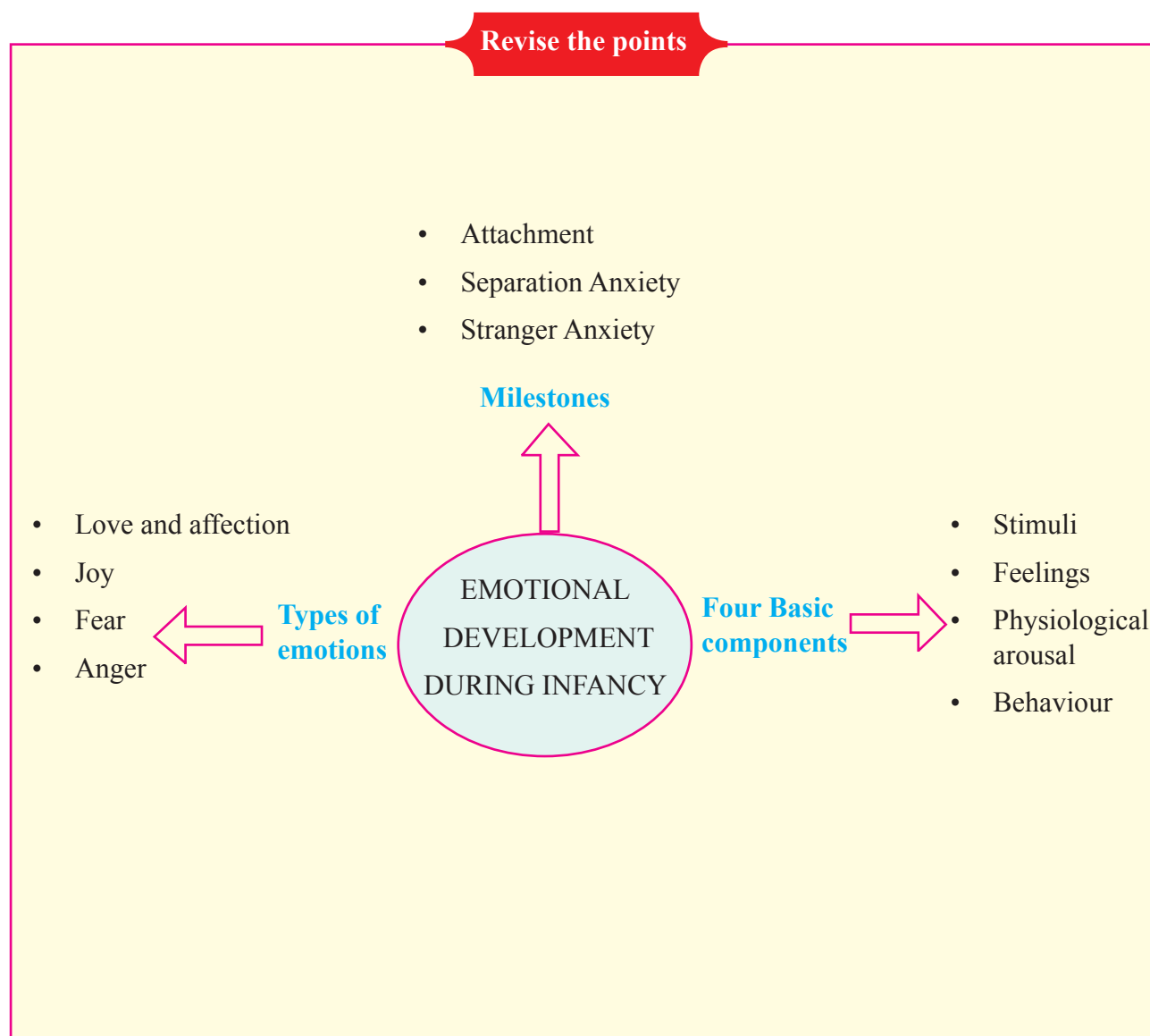
Stranger anxiety is a normal stage of emotional development. There are a few simple ways that stranger anxiety can be reduced.

Handling

- Allow the new person to interact with the child from a distance.
- If the infant is meeting someone new, let them know that he /she has trouble dealing with new people right away.
- Interacting with the new person along with the caregiver can lessen anxiety or make it fade away.
- Allow the child to take his / her own time to get used to new people.
- Let the baby know that his / her feelings are understood. Do not force the infant to interact and support him / her when needed.

Activity :

Write the difference between separation anxiety and stranger anxiety





Exercises

Q. 1. Select and write the most appropriate word from the given alternatives.

1. A stirred up state of an individual is called
a) excitement b) emotion
c) attachment
2. is a pleasant emotion.
a) joy b) anger
c) fear

3. Body's natural response to stress is

a) tendency b) anxiety
c) crying

4. Anything that still exists even when it is not seen or heard is called

a) separation anxiety b) attachment
c) object permanence

Q. 2. Match the pairs.

| A | B |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Love and affection | a. Left alone in the bed for too long |
| 2. Joy | b. Sudden change in position |
| 3. Fear | c. Smile, reacting out |
| 4. Anger | d. Smiling, gurgling, laughing |
| | e. Early feelings are limited |

Q. 3. State whether following statements are True or False.

1. Stimuli is that which provokes a reaction of a person.
2. Physiological arousal means feeling.
3. Infant attachment is the deep emotional connection.
4. Stranger anxiety shows that a baby has learnt the difference between known and unknown people.

Q. 4. Explain the following term.

1. Separation anxiety
2. Joy
3. Anger

Q. 5. Define the following.

1. Feeling
2. Stimuli
3. Physiological arousal
4. Behavioural response
5. Emotion

Q. 6. Write the differences.

1. Separation Anxiety and Stranger Anxiety

Q. 7. Write the causes of.

1. Separation Anxiety
2. Stranger Anxiety
3. Joy
4. Anger
5. Fear

Q. 8. How to handle the following emotions.

1. Stranger anxiety
2. Anger
3. Fear

Q. 10. Write short notes on.

1. Fear
2. Attachment

Q. 9. How is the emotion expressed.

1. Joy
2. Fear
3. Attachment

Q. 11. Read the following paragraph, and write answers to the question

Infants always show attachment behaviour. Infant attachment is an emotional connection that an infant forms with his or her primary caregiver, often the mother. It is a bond that leads the infant to experience pleasure, joy, safety, and comfort in the caregiver's presence. The baby feels distress when that person is absent. Soothing, comforting, and providing pleasure is the primary element of attachment. Attachment protects the child from any impending harm as they cling, grasp or vocalise indicating discomfort or distress. This attachment behaviour is an indication of the infant's trust toward the caregiver. They show distress when the caregiver is absent.

1. Describe attachment with a suitable example.
2. When does a child show distress? Write some symptoms of distress.
3. Attachment behaviour is an indication of the infant's trust toward the caregiver. Explain the statement with your experience in day to day life.
4. Soothing, _____ and providing pleasure are primary element of attachment.

Project / Self Study

1. **Observe at least two infants to record their milestones in emotional development based on the chart given in the text**
2. **Make a chart on different emotions using Emojis**
3. **Collect pictures of infants from magazines or news papers depicting various emotions and label them.**

