

## **ATTACHMENT IN THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY – A CREATIVE PROCESS L'ATTACHEMENT DANS LA FAMILLE ADOPTIF – UN PROCES CREATIF**

**This one day course is spoken by Dr. Rygaard in English and translated live into French.  
Arranged by adoption internationale, Gouvernement de Quebec, Domenica Labasi.**

**You can sign in by mailing [npr@erhvervspsykologerne.dk](mailto:npr@erhvervspsykologerne.dk)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The bond between child and parent is - in most families - something that grows out of every day life. Not so in the adoptive family, where bonding and attachment is a creative and challenging process for all family members.

The challenge comes from the fact that the parents and children in the adoptive family do not know each other beforehand, and they do not share the genetic, social and racial backgrounds. Furthermore, many adopted children suffer from the strains of multiple separations, poverty and neglect prior to the meeting with the new parents. On this background, it is very understandable that adoptive families often experience problems when struggling to include the new family member and create the desired bonds.

Dr. Niels Peter Rygaard is an adoptive father and a clinical psychologist, who for 25 years has worked with attachment disorder in children in general, and the problems of adoptive families in particular. He works with 3<sup>rd</sup> World orphanage development, development of institutions for children and youth, and as a family therapist for adoptive families. He has written several books on the subject, among them “*Severe Attachment Disorder in Childhood – A Practical Guide to Therapy*” (see [www.attachment-disorder.net](http://www.attachment-disorder.net) ).

In a number of lectures – each followed by small discussions – he will address the following issues:

### **INTRODUCTION**

The orphan population. The characteristics of children who may be adopted at some point in life. How many are there, what is causing their adoption, what characterizes those who are adopted? How many adopted children develop problems.

The adopted child: what are the life circumstances of the adopted child, and how do they influence the attachment process in the adoptive family?

The adoptive parents: what are their circumstances, and how does this influence their expectations and hopes?

The meeting: what are the typical problems in the meeting between child and parents?

How can you cope with these problems as a parent?

Discussions.

## **ATTACHMENT AND DEPRIVATION OVER THE LIFESPAN – WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?**

What happens to children who suffer from deprivation prior to adoption? Results from a number of scientific studies are presented.

**Babies.** Activating the brain.

What are the symptoms of lack of attachment and deprivation in babies?

What can you do if the baby has symptoms of deprivation? Some methods for working with children up to age 2.

Attachment: what is “attachment”? The general attachment theory and the four attachment patterns. Results from studies of attachment. The difference between the parental attachment pattern and that of the adopted child – how do you cope with that? Attachment pattern and age: when can a child be expected to adopt the parental pattern? How do you create a secure base for attachment.

Discussions

**The toddler:** Enhancing the object relation development.

What are the classic problems for the child in creating internal working models and build the framework for understanding the social environment in a coherent manner? How can you help the child exercise basic functions such as: concentration, figure/ background perception, recognition, motivation, etc.?

Discussions

**The schoolchild:** Learning how to learn.

Common problems in the learning process. The basics of milieu therapy. How should the classroom environment be designed, and how can the teacher help the special needs child?

Discussions.

**Puberty:** Identity and behaviour problems in the transformation to adulthood.

Puberty can be more difficult than normally: identity issues, alienation, rebellion based on early negative experiences, fear of separation. How can you help the young person develop a useful sense of identity? How can you redefine adoption when the separation is difficult?

Discussions.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The most important aspects of the lectures.