



Helping Hands Christian Learning Center

"Let Us Make a Difference in Your Child's Life"

Security Blankets & Other Favorite Cuddlies

Sometime between one and three years of age, your child may develop a special attachment to a blanket, teddy bear, or other cuddly object. About 60% of toddlers in Western societies develop such an attachment. The custom is not as common in non-Western cultures for various reasons related to different child-rearing practices. Although many children begin to exhibit some signs of attachment as early as three months, attachment to a specific object, such as a baby doll, becomes more noticeable by about 12 months, and peaks between 15 and 36 months.

By one year, a child's sense of self is beginning to develop. He is now old enough to go get or ask for an object that he wants. At this stage in his life, he is dealing with the transition from infancy to toddlerhood. Because a child's favorite cuddly can help to make this transition smoother, these objects are sometimes referred to by psychologists as "transition objects." During this transition period, children want to become more independent, yet they experience anxiety and insecurity related to their new-found autonomy.

By choosing his own specific cuddly, a young child is able to express his unique individuality and autonomy. At the same time, that cuddly provides feelings of comfort and security when needed. In general, children who possess a favorite object of attachment have been found to be well adjusted. The exception is the child who sits alone with his "blanky" in the corner of the room, using the object as a way to avoid social contact with other children. Parents or caregivers sometimes think that taking the blanket from the child will force him to interact with other children. But such a child is likely experiencing other problems such as poorly developed social skills. So merely taking the blanket from him will not likely be a satisfactory solution.



Even if you are sometimes embarrassed at the sight of your child clutching an old blanket or cuddly, just rejoice that he has found a most effective and appropriate way to handle his life's problems and experiences.