



JPA

Juvenile Protective Association



May 2018

Attachment

I added this year's Mothers' Day card to my memory box over the Memorial Day weekend. It joins the cards filled with expressions of love and appreciation I've received over the years. As all moms know, we cherish – and need - those cards to sustain us long after the celebration ends. While it might be a coincidence, celebrating Mothers' Day and Mental Health Month in May makes sense. Mothers help set the tone for the well-being and functioning of our society.

The bonds of attachment they form with their children are essential to creating strong, flourishing adults. Celebrating mothers is an important acknowledgment of their crucial role in the mental health of families and our nation.

I'm not saying mothers are responsible for every action or decision their children make. We aren't! And sometimes, of course, the primary attachment figure can be a dad, an auntie, a grandmother, or another caring adult. What is most important is that very young children develop a secure attachment with someone who genuinely and consistently cares for them.

continued on next page

The dictionary definition of “attachment” as “the condition of being attached to something or someone, in particular,” hardly does justice to its powerful impact as understood in the clinical world. The father of attachment theory, John Bowlby, proposed that a child’s primary attachment figure acted as a secure base for the child to explore the world and that the relationship itself was the prototype for all future social relationships, so disrupting it could have severe consequences. Those could include delinquency, reduced intelligence, increased aggression, depression, and even affectless psychopathy. Clearly, securing bright futures for our children – and preventing suffering – is a big responsibility.

As I write this, I’ve decided to take this year’s Mothers’ Day card out of storage. I’m going to put it in a place where I can see it daily. You moms out there might want to do the same. And kids, you don’t need to buy us more cards this year – a hug will do just fine.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen". The script is fluid and cursive.

Karen G. Foley
President & CEO