Traditionally believed infant needed mother to form healthy attachment and therefore, little attention was paid to the role of the father. Sheffer and Emerson’s study highlights this, stating most of the infant attached to their mothers first, although around 75% of infants observed appeared attached to their fathers also by 18 months.

## Role of the father

Grossman used longitudinal study to compare the influence of mothers and fathers’ relationships with their children from infancy to their teens. Founding that the quality of infant attachments to mothers was correlated to quality of attachment in adolescence. The infant’s relationship with fathers had no bearings on quality of attachment in adolescence.

However, quality of play with infants showed significant findings between the fathers and infants, quality of play with fathers and infants did correlate with attachment in adolescence -suggesting fathers have a different role in attachment to the nurturing role of mothers. Geiger found that fathers’ relationship with infant is focused around play contrasting to mothers focusing on nurturing.

## Father as primary carer

Field used observation to compare the behaviour of primary caregiver mothers to secondary caregiver fathers and primary caregiver fathers. Primary caregiver fathers behaved more like mothers showing reciprocity, interactional synchrony, nurturing, smiling and face to face imitating. Fathers showed the heightened responsiveness of ‘mothers’ suggesting it is sensitive responsiveness and not gender which is crucial for attachment formation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe (6)</th>
<th>Evaluate (10)</th>
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| **Parent-infant attachment**  
Traditionally believed infant needed mother to form healthy attachment and therefore, little attention was paid to the role of the father. Sheffer and Emerson’s study highlights this, stating most of the infant attached to their mothers first, although around 75% of infants observed appeared attached to their fathers also by 18 months. | Holistic approach  
Inconsistent finding  
**Primary attachments:** predominantly case that mothers, not fathers, are primary attachment figures. Could be due to social values and norms which dictate women should be more caring and sensitive to infants needs. Alternatively, could be biological reasons such as hormone differences – oestrogen – might make women more nurturing and better suited for the role of primary attachment figure. This is a weakness as the traditional role assumptions can mean fathers simply don’t feel they should act caring or nurturing.  
**Support for father being primary caregiver:** however, Caldera found that when fathers were heavily involved in care-giving activities the infant was more likely to have strong attachments with him. This is a strength as suggest the traditional role assumptions can be contradicted supporting the role of the father being the primary caregiver.  
**Secondary attachments may not be important:**

| Field | }