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# Attachment Theory and Attachment-Based Interventions

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# Outline for Today

- Early childhood tasks and social fields
- Attachment theory basics
- Measurement of attachment
- Intergenerational transmission
- Outcomes
- Approaches to intervention



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## Section A

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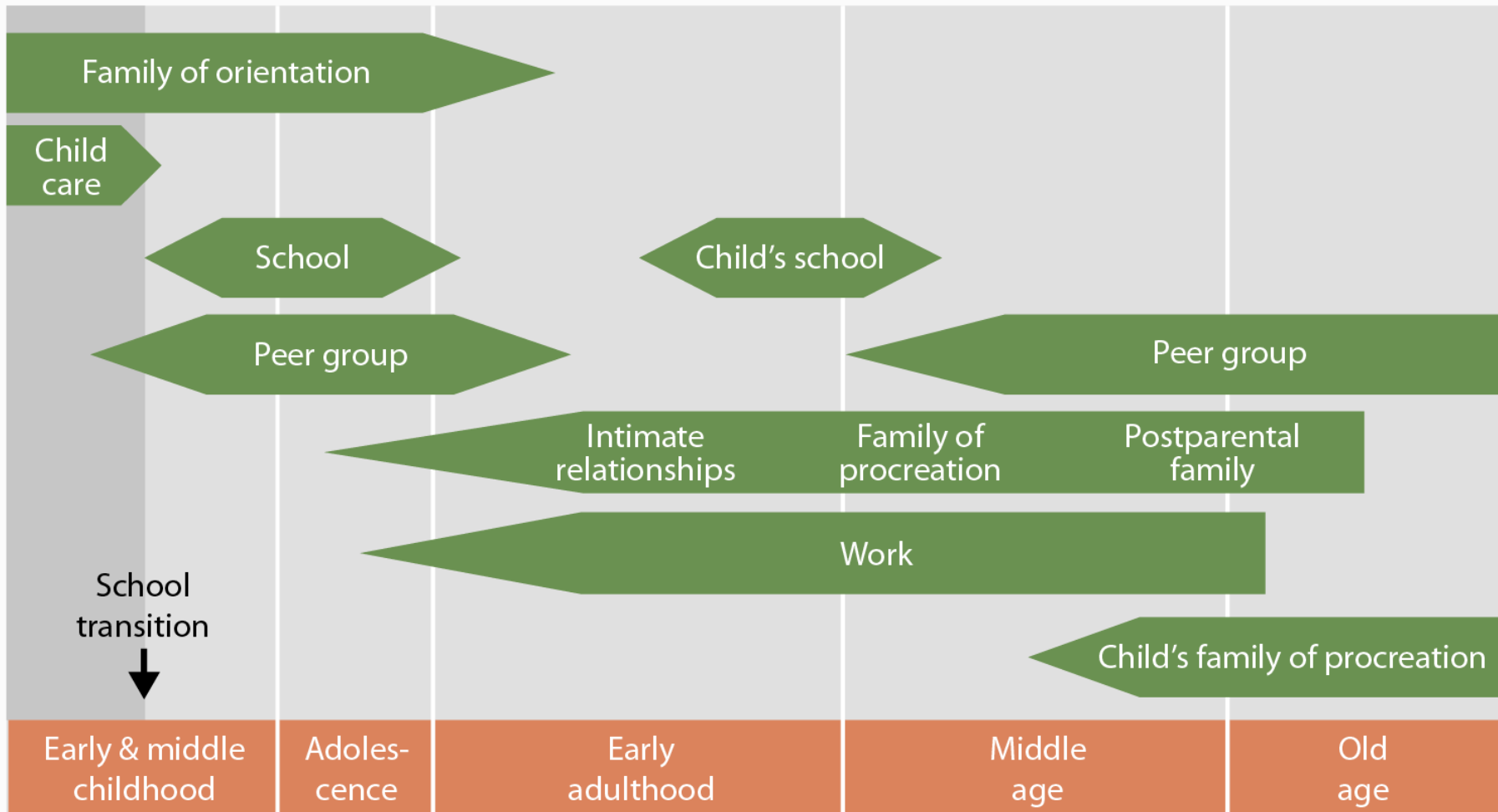
### Early Childhood Social Fields and Tasks

# Early Childhood Social Fields and Tasks

- Who/what influences early development?
- In what domains?

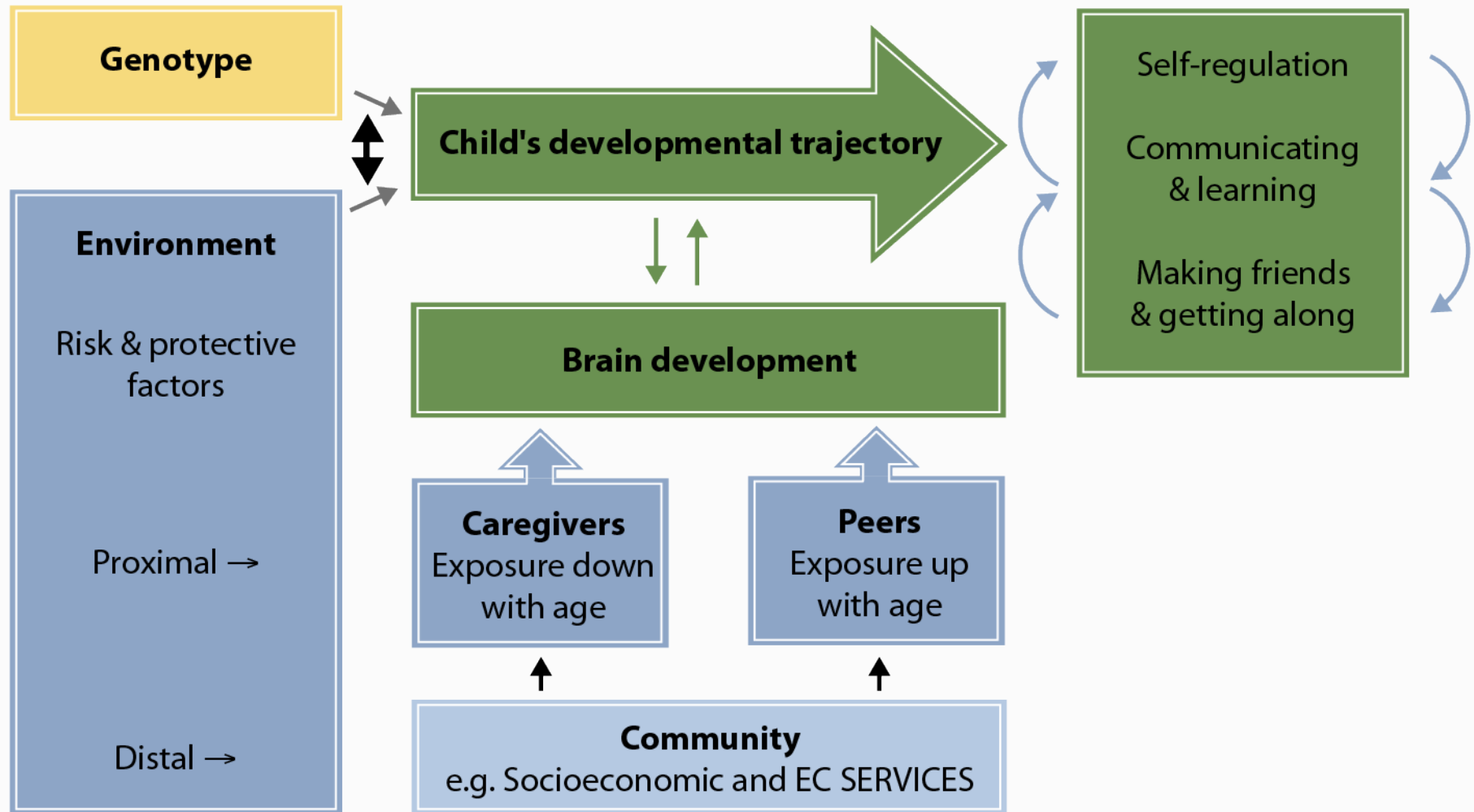
# Social Fields across the Life Span

Major EC tasks = language acquisition & impulse control



Adapted by CTLT from Kellam et al., (1975) Mental Health and Going to School. Chicago, IL; Univ. of Chicago Press.

# Early Development: Influences and Domains



Adapted by CTLT from Tremblay, R.E. 2006. [www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca)

# Attachment Theory Basics

- Early childhood tasks and social fields
- Attachment theory basics
  - Behavioral systems
  - Basic tenets
  - As applied to parenting



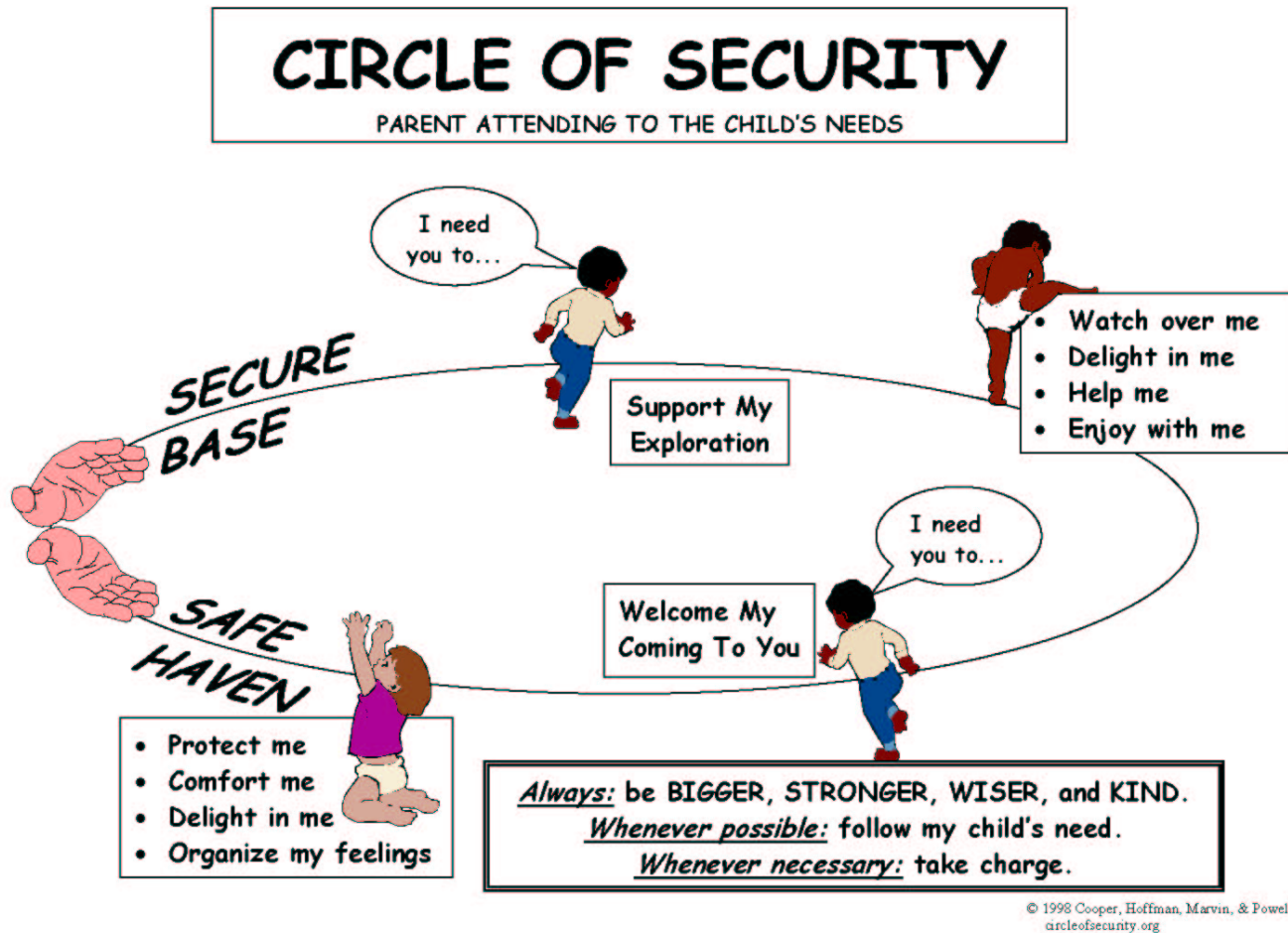
# Behavioral Systems

- Exploratory system
- Fear system
- Attachment system

# John Bowlby's Attachment Theory—1

- Children need their primary caregiver(s) to be:
  - A secure base for exploration
  - A safe haven for protection

# Circle of Security



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## John Bowlby's Attachment Theory—2

- Children's perceptions of their caregiver form the basis for “internal working models”:
  - Of the self
  - Of the caregiver
  - Of others

## John Bowlby's Attachment Theory—3

- As individuals grow to adulthood,
  - These internal working models influence their interpersonal behavior

# Attachment Theory as Applied to Parenting

- Internal working models shape ...
  - Parents' interpretation of their children's needs
  - Parents' responses to children's needs

# Measurement of Attachment

- Early childhood tasks and social fields
- Attachment theory basics
- Measurement of attachment
  - In children
  - In adults
    - ▶ Per developmental psychology
    - ▶ Per social psychology

# Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure

- Mary Ainsworth's "Strange Situation" procedure:
  1. Parent and child introduced to room
  2. Child allowed to explore
  3. Stranger enters, parent leaves
  4. Stranger gears behavior to that of child
  5. Parent returns, greets/comforts, leaves again
  6. Stranger leaves, child is alone
  7. Stranger returns, gears behavior to child's
  8. Parent returns, greets/comforts, stranger leaves



# Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure

- Observations of child's behavior
  - Exploratory
  - Reactions to parent's departures and returns
- Classification of child's behavior upon parent's return

# Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure

		Observed infant behavior
A	Insecure - avoidant	Infant is detached on separation, avoids parent on reunion, engages in displacement exploration that is devoid of true interest
B	Secure	Infant engages in positive exploration, is upset by separation but gives a positive response to parent upon reunion, with a rapid return to exploration
C	Insecure - resistant/ ambivalent	Infant is preoccupied with parent's availability. Shows distress on separation and anger/ambivalence upon reunion and is difficult to comfort.

# Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure

		Expected <b>parent</b> behavior (not necessarily during procedure)
A	Insecure - avoidant	Parent is insensitive to infant's signals and deflects proximity seeking
B	Secure	Parent is consistently sensitive and responsive to infant's signals
C	Insecure - resistant/ ambivalent	Parent is inconsistent in response to infant. May vary between insensitive and intrusive.