**Individual Differences in Attachment: Ainsworth & Bell (1970)**

**Aims and Procedures**

Given the amount of variation between children and the circumstances they grow up in, it does not seem likely that every

child will develop attachments in exactly the same way. Mary Ainsworth devised an assessment technique called the

strange situation classification (SSC) in order to investigate how attachments might vary between children. In the SSC,

children are unobtrusively observed to see how the react when left alone in a strange environment, how they respond to

strangers and how they react when their primary carer returns. Ainsworth & Bell (1971) assessed about 100 American

infants and their primary carers in order to find out if there was a pattern in the way they responded.

**Findings**

Ainsworth & Bell found that, according to their reactions to the strange situation, the children could be classified into

three broad categories. Briefly describe each one, and state the percentage of the sample it comprised.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Attachment type** | **Features** | **Percentage** |
| Secure (Type B) |  |  |
| Insecure – avoidant  |  |  |
| Insecure- resistant |  |  |

**Conclusions**

Ainsworth & Bell suggested that behaviour in the strange situation was determined by the behaviour of the primary carer. *Briefly explain how this might be the case.*