

Mind-mindedness across Time & Place, & Links with Child Development

Rooted in attachment theory and akin to the construct of reflective functioning, the concept of 'mind-mindedness' (MM) defined as the propensity for parents to view their children as independent agents with their own interests, thoughts and feelings has garnered international research interest (for a systematic review, see Aldrich et al 2021). Nevertheless, several avenues of enquiry remain relatively unexplored. In this talk, I will ask whether MM: (i) matters across different developmental periods; (ii) is measurable before birth; (iii) shows within-couple associations between mothers and fathers; (iv) is meaningful across different cultures; and (v) displays culturally universal associations with individual differences in children's executive functions. In answering these five questions I will draw upon three separate studies: the 10- year-longitudinal 'Toddlers Up' study that focused on toddlers at risk of developing conduct problems; the New Fathers and Mothers Study), which tracked 846 expectant first-time parents from the UK, Netherlands and USA to explore links between executive function development and early parent-child interaction quality; and the Ready or Not Study of school readiness, which involved 1,000+ families of children from the UK, Hong Kong and Mainland China to test the generalisability of the antecedents and sequelae for individual differences in children's cognitive skills.